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NEW STATESMAN
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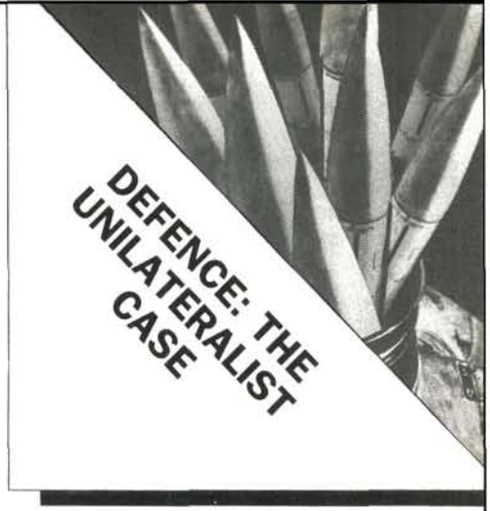

DEFENCE: THE UNILATERALIST CASE

SPIES...

JAN 1 1987

Who needs them?

"The basic fact whether M15 did mount an operation against the Prime Minister of the day is so scandalous . . . that we have to get to the root of the matter"

Illustration: David Cutter

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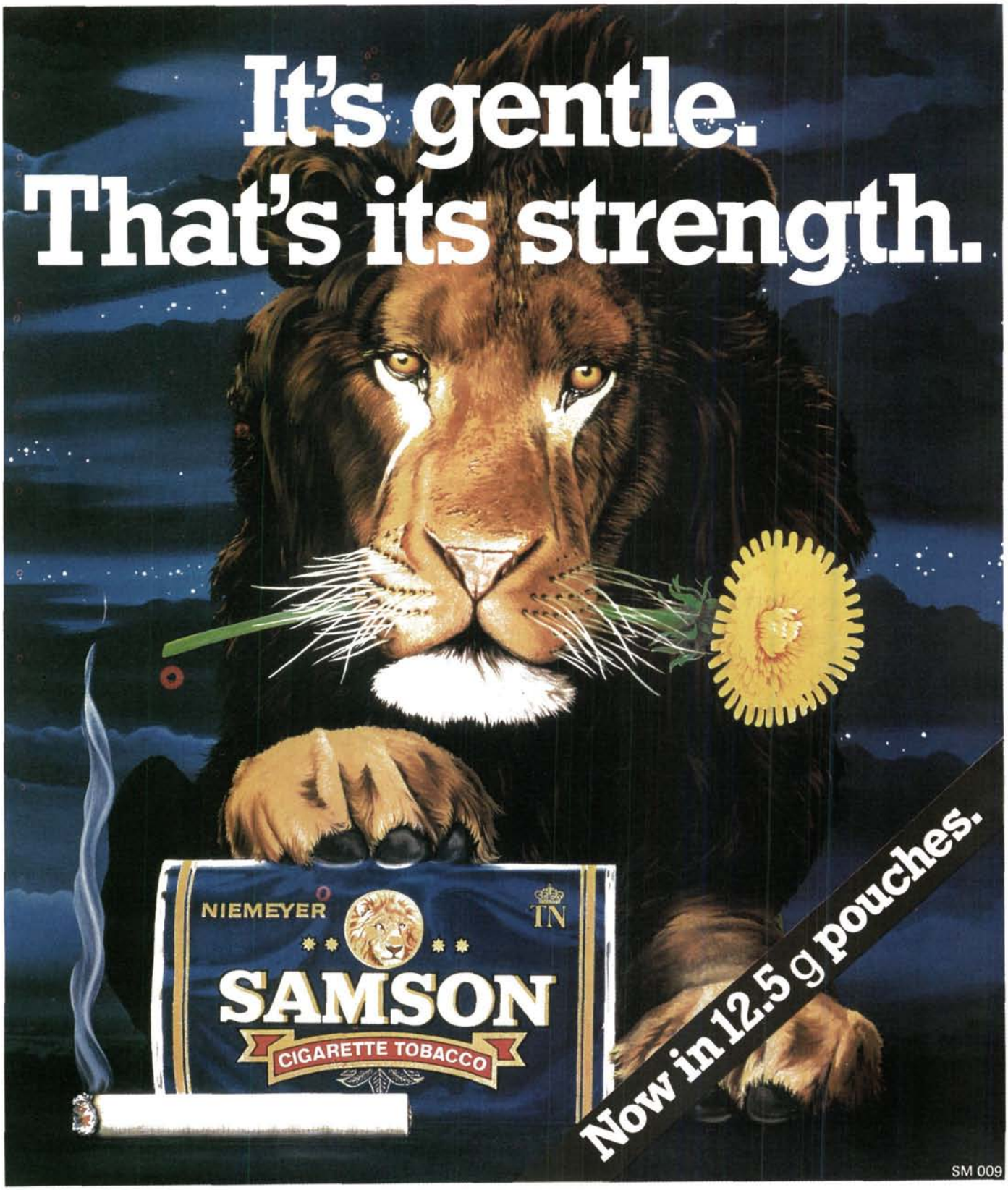

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 112 No 2907 12 December 1986

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ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

Next week's 80-PAGE BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE includes:

- Double-page cartoon strip by 'Spitting Image'
- The Year in Review: MARY KALDOR on Labour and defence; PETER WILBY on the great education debate; PAUL HALLAM on the sexual recession; BOYD TONKIN on 'designer Socialism'
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- Great new short stories from WILLIAM BURROUGHS and NAOMI MITCHISON
- God-awful Christmases: FAY WELDON and JEANETTE WINTERSON
- ALEXEI SAYLE reveals he's the Fifth Man

Work with the grain

THE CALL in last week's *New Statesman* leader for the Labour Party to change its defence policy was greeted with dismay by the paper's editorial staff and with sorrow *and* anger by many on the left. The staff put a collective view on p10: some of the reactions, including an 'official' one from Larry Whitty, Labour's general secretary, are on p32.

The core of the argument in that leader was this: that a Labour government which carried out a mandate to scrap Polaris, cancel Trident and remove all US nuclear weaponry from this country could act as a destabilising force on what was described as a 'tense and distrustful relationship' between the superpowers. Second, that the case for disarmament — with which that leader and this is wholly in agreement — would be more powerfully and securely put from within the NATO nuclear strategy than from without.

Crucial to the argument was this judgement: that while a Labour government has it in its sovereign power to carry out its defence programme, it can best achieve its ends by agreement with its NATO partners and by pacing its commitment to disarmament to the state of superpower negotiations prevailing at the time.

On Wednesday of this week, Labour published its defence statement: 'Modern Britain in a Modern World: The Power to defend our Country'. This 'new approach to defending Britain' will be the basis for Labour's election pledges on defence. What does it say?

First, it is markedly patriotic, and pro-defence. It taxes the present government with 'presiding over a decline in the strength of all our armed forces' and adds that 'Had the invasion of the Falklands by the Argentine junta come even six months later than it did, it is doubtful that we could have regained the islands'.

It reminds us that the 'energy and drive' of Ernest Bevin when Labour's Foreign Secretary in the Attlee governments was instrumental in creating NATO, and repeats several times that Britain would remain inside NATO, attempting to change its strategy the while. It points, though, to the geopolitical changes since the 1940s; at the centre of that argument is a US with global interests and a Western Europe which has 'shed its far-flung interests with its empires'. Western Europe's main interest is in 'regional stability and detente': by contrast, the US under President Reagan has pursued 'an aggressive policy of global intervention'. The question has become, it says, 'whether the Americans would risk Washington for London or Chicago for Hamburg'.

The document is massively right. It is right about cost: the UK cannot continue to afford a conventional force of present size *and* Trident. It is right about the aims — detente and disarmament. It is right about the government's 'delusions of grandeur'. It is right to stress that the defence of Western Europe can no longer be comfortably assumed to be a largely US responsibility.

It is right, too, to rid ourselves of the Trident commitment. And it is right to make it clear that the rest of the Anglo-American nuclear arsenal — the ageing Polaris, cruise missiles, the Poseidon nuclear submarine facilities and the F-111 nuclear warheads — will go. Cruise was anyway seen as eminently tradeable during Reykjavik: while the Poseidon facilities are likely to be rendered technically obsolete soon. But is it not reasonable to propose that they will go as part of a bargain? That if the UK makes an initial move — say, to send back cruise, which could well be popular — it would expect a reciprocal move? And if one did not materialise, it would be bound to think again? The British electorate could accept and understand this, and could be brought round to support Labour's aims, in a way which, the polls continue to show, it is not now. Neil Kinnock has done a very great deal to bring the Labour Party to an understanding that change must work with the grain of the people. That applies here too.

This does not mean Labour reneging on its ideals: on the contrary, it makes them more likely of fulfilment. A Labour government could become the political focus for detente and disarmament: it would be active in its search for agreement and breakthrough.

Labour can say this to the electorate with a real expectation of support. It can say it to the US and to the other NATO powers with a real expectation of understanding. It can say it to the Soviet Union with a real expectation of a response. Its defence document, which publishes its decision to remove all nuclear weaponry from the UK as 'an intention' leaves it space to so argue. In doing so, it will make defeat of the government more likely: a defeat desperately important for the future of the disarmament process, and much else.

As a former *NS* editor makes clear in this issue (Anthony Howard, Letters p32), last week's leader did not mark a break with *NS* editorial policy on disarmament. But it would have made the comradely, but deeply-felt, division in the paper's editorial ranks less deep had it made clear its sole source, as this one does.

John Lloyd

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Making a hash of it

More people are going to jail for possession of cannabis. The latest information from the Home Office shows 1,368 jailed in 1985, as against 1,097 in 1984.

The new data is highly revealing. 173 individuals were imprisoned for terms of more than six months — 93 in 1984. Convictions or cautions on this charge, at 18,213, amounted to 72 per cent of all drugs convictions, including every type of drug or charge; 69 per cent in 1975. More people were jailed on a charge for possessing, supplying, growing or importing cannabis (3,444) than heroin (1,751) or other drugs, including heroin, combined (2,332).

Prison for possession isn't the issue it ought to be. The Legalise Cannabis Campaign, with limited funds, has in recent years adopted a low-key stance, but plans publicity next year to mark the 20th anniversary of a famous advertisement in the *Guardian*, signed, inter alia, by Richard Branson, Graham Greene and Julie Christie, which demanded an end to the legal ban. No serious effort to alter the law has been made since 1982, when Lord Avebury tried to amend the Criminal Justice Bill. Opponents of prison as a legal remedy await a broader review of sentencing policy, designed to cut the number of petty offenders in jail.

Mrs Thatcher, questioned by the LCC last year, said that some people can take cannabis, used 'responsibly', without serious harm. Under fire, the government's case for the status quo rests on inconclusive medical evidence.

Tory backbenchers, though, are uneasy. 'It's appalling to send people to prison for personal possession,' said Charles Irving (Cheltenham). 'Punishments are arbitrary. The prisons are packed and there's a danger that they'll take more when they're there'. He intends to raise the issue in the debate on the new Criminal Justice Bill. 'It's the heaviest penalty for the least heinous drugs offence,' agreed Richard Body (Holland with Boston). Robert Atkins (South Ribble) said that he wanted to see a prompt review of the drug's legal status and sentencing policy by the Home Affairs Select Committee.

The pattern of punishment is capricious, critics say. Impressions suggest that the police in parts of the country — Scotland, the Channel Islands, Liverpool — are tougher than in London. Don Aitken, from the LCC, says that jailed offenders are likely to be 'regular, unlucky users' who run into inexperienced lay magistrates; 'the articulate often get a conditional discharge'. Mathew Atha, its current co-ordinator and author of a master's thesis on the black economy in cannabis, argues from data for seizures of herbal cannabis or ganga (as against cannabis resin) that blacks are 'two or three times more likely' to be caught and convicted than they should be as a ratio of cannabis consumers.

Penalties, he says, are often based on artificial values of seized loads; in a case this year, in Solihull, 30 seedlings, likely to yield 15 ounces, when the typical street price is £100 an ounce, were rated at £3,000. New laws offer more scope for casuistical prosecutions; the courts can now seize property from a person, convicted for supply for passing a joint at a party, on the basis that he's been trading consistently for five years; *he* has to show that his assets have been obtained lawfully.

Britain punishes possession much more severely than most other western countries. In Canada, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, and in 13 US states, possession is either decriminalised or rarely punished unless large quantities are involved.

Few doctors now think that cannabis is physically addictive; the strongest social argument against it is that it induces an 'amotivational syndrome'; progression to harder drugs is objectively more likely to be due to a common culture of illicit consumption than a chemical craving. Political reform is overdue.

Robert Silver

Shut up and keep shaving

Billionaire Texan H. Ross Perot has been one of the bit players in the Irangate drama in Washington. He was an associate of Colonel Oliver North, the White House aide who resigned for passing money to the Nicaraguan Contras: earlier this year, he agreed to a request from North to put up $2m ransom money for the US hostages in the Lebanon.

Perot is a larger-than-life patriot whose public posture is underpinned by the success of the company he founded, Electronic Data Systems, now the computer subsidiary of General Motors. The EDS subsidiary in the UK has pioneered some of the most stringent employment contracts ever seen in Britain.

On 4 June this year, Denise Howell, a helpline operator working for EDS in Luton, mentioned her recent payrise to colleagues: 24 hours later, she was sacked. A clause in her contract had forbidden such a discussion. She appealed, but EDS refused to see her union officials or her lawyer.

The company's antipathy to beards is legendary. Men have to shave every day — or like Howell, be dismissed. No one can drink at lunchtime. A non-fraternisation clause strictly prohibits the development of friendly relations between EDS employees and those of client companies. An EDS employee is alleged to have been fired for having an affair with someone from the company with which he was working.

EDS won't respond to questions about these allegations. And it won't talk to unions, say a spokeswoman, because 'we have a method of negotiation in which the collective does not have a place'.

The company's employment contracts have not so far been put under legal scrutiny: but that may change. EDS is suing two former trainee programmers from West London for the return of its investment in their training. Graduate trainees have to sign a promissory note to pay back up to £5,000 in training costs if they leave the company within three years. The case is unprecedented and will reach the courts next month.

Perot, who created the company in his image, sold it out to GM in late 1984 for $2.5bn. *Forbes* magazine rates him as the US's second richest man. His ransom wheeze with Oliver North failed: but he *has* received widespread recognition. The Prince of Wales included him in the Royal Tour of the US last year when presenting him with the Winston Churchill award for Personal Dynamism.

David Holmes and Michael Dempsey

STUFFING FOR RED STOCKINGS

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PETER KELLNER

British Gas and all that: which public, whose good?

TIME WAS when the left despised opinion polls. They took the poetry out of politics, said Aneurin Bevan. I can find out more about public opinion talking to my general committee in Tottenham, said Norman Atkinson when he was Labour Party treasurer. (I wonder whether he still feels that way. Last year Tottenham's GC deselected him.)

Even now it is easy to mock polls. What are we to make of this pair of questions from a Canadian government survey (quoted by MORI's Robert Worcester at an international conference of pollsters last month in Strasbourg)? Q1. Have you ever attempted to take your own life? Q2. If yes, were you successful?

Such infelicities, however, have not stopped the left gradually coming to terms with polls. The Labour Party has used them privately at every general election since 1970, although it started polling too close to the 1983 election for MORI's findings to be of any practical use in designing the party's strategy in the run-up to that election.

Now the left's use has gone a stage further. It is employing polls more publicly: partly to listen to public opinion, partly to *show* that it is listening, and partly to demonstrate that real voters do not always share the values and attitudes of the chattering classes or tabloid leader-writers. At last the left has discovered that polls are able to provide a powerful democratic antidote to the arrogance of the elite.

The campaign to save the Greater London Council demonstrated the potential of polls as weapons for democratic counter-attack. In 1983, when abolition of the GLC was inserted at the last moment into the Conservatives' election manifesto, only 30 per cent were satisfied with the GLC's record, while 49 per cent were dissatisfied (MORI poll for the London *Evening Standard*). After the 1983 election polling research found that while most Londoners had a hazy idea of what the GLC actually did, they did not like to see a democratically elected institution abolished.

On the basis of this research, the GLC mounted its anti-abolition campaign, stressing the issue of democracy. By March 1984, 53 per cent of Londoners were satisfied with the GLC's record, while the number dissatisfied had fallen to 33 per cent.

As MORI's Tim Burns showed at the Strasbourg conference, the impact of the GLC's campaign went far beyond its use of poster sites. By publicly playing back what voters felt, the GLC forced the media to soften its coverage of Ken Livingstone. Gradually the image of 'red Ken' was replaced with that of 'the people's Ken', even in papers that had previously been most hostile. Sure, the GLC ultimately lost its battle for survival (although ILEA lives on as a separate, directly-elected authority). But the government lost a great deal of public support, and the career of one cabinet minister, Patrick Jenkin, was wrecked.

THERE IS a topical purpose to this trip down memory lane. This week the Trades Union Congress has published the results of a survey it commissioned from National Opinion Polls on privatisation. During the week when British Gas shares started trading on the Stock Exchange, the TUC's exercise is of clear relevance to the arguments about the Tories' ideology and Labour's response.

It is worth setting down the figures NOP found in answer to the basic question it posed on behalf of the TUC. (Fieldwork was conducted in late October among almost 2,000 respondents throughout Great Britain.)

Q. I am going to read out a list of industries and services and for each group I would like you to tell me whether you think they should be publicly owned or under private ownership.

	Public %	Private %	Don't know %
Essential services like electricity, gas and water	71	21	9
The defence factories and Royal Navy dockyards	71	15	13
Basic industries like coal, railways and steel	56	33	11
Local bus services	55	37	8
British Airports Authority	49	34	17
British Telecom	53	37	10

The figures look good for the government's critics. They suggest that there are votes to be won by an effective anti-government campaign.

Before we look at the potential for such a campaign, however, a word of warning. Poll figures need to be read with care. That 71-21 majority in favour of the public ownership of 'essential services like electricity, gas and water' seems impressive. But other people have been polling in the same neck of the utility woods and come up with rather different results.

Two weeks ago the financial communications and marketing group, Dewe Rogerson, published the latest in a series of polls specifically about the privatisation of British Gas. The survey was conducted in early November by Survey Research Associates (SRA). It asked: 'As you may know, the government intends to privatise British Gas, that is to sell shares in British Gas to the public. Do you support or oppose the decision to privatise British Gas?' The result: 44 per cent support, 28 per cent oppose.

HOW DO WE explain the discrepancy? There is no mileage to be gained from arguing that the messenger has contaminated the message. Both the NOP and the SRA surveys were conducted according to normal polling standards, and in neither case were the names of their clients divulged to respondents. So it is *not* the case that people tailored their answers to try and please either the TUC or Dewe Rogerson.

Nor can we argue that NOP is more (or less) reliable as a company than SRA: both are part of the same group. And their sample sizes were much the same, so there is nothing to go on there.

Could some of the discrepancy be the result of timing? The TUC survey was conducted before the 'tell Sid' campaign had made much progress, while the latest Dewe Rogerson survey was conducted at its height. However, one of the earlier Dewe Rogerson surveys was conducted at exactly the same time as the NOP poll. The answers: 44 per cent supported privatisation, while 29 per cent opposed it.

So two polls conducted at the same time on the same issue by related polling organisations have produced directly contradictory results. According to the NOP/TUC survey 28 million electors want gas kept in public ownership. The SRA/Dewe Rogerson figure is only 12 million.

The clue to this puzzle is, I believe, to be found in the wording of the two questions; in particular the use of the word 'public'. People are, on the whole, in favour of the 'public'. It implies democracy, the general good, us rather than them. In the NOP question 'public' is used in opposition to privatisation; in the SRA question it is used in favour of privatisation ('. . . sell shares in British Gas to the public').

Given the choice between the government and 'the public' owning British Gas, a plurality favour 'the public'; given the choice between it being 'publicly owned' and it being 'under private ownership', the 'public' alternative triumphs. I rather suspect that some of NOP's respondents believe that British Gas has now been handed over to 'public' ownership — the share-buying 'public'.

There is another twist to the question-wording issue. The NOP question referred to 'essential services'. It is a fair description of electricity, gas and water. But it is bound to have influenced the responses. So would the pooling of the three services. Whereas SRA asked specifically about gas, and loaded the word 'public' on the privatisation side of the scale, NOP listed a range of 'essential services' (instead of talking about, say, 'large businesses selling their services to millions of paying customers') and offered a 'public' versus 'private' choice.

All of which could lead anti-poll left-wingers to throw their hands in the air and cry, 'we told you so. Polls can be manipulated to give you any answer you want. As Disraeli didn't quite say, there are four kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, Sir Robert Armstrong's evidence and opinion polls'.

I suggest a different conclusion. The political battle over privatisation-versus-public ownership remains wide open. It is a battle, above all, over possession of the word 'public'. If it comes to be allied with share-ownership and a faith in private-sector business efficiency, then the Tories will win the argument. If, on the other hand, 'public' is restored to its more general meaning, *and* it can be shown how to run state industries efficiently and democratically, then privatisation could yet backfire as a vote-winner. At least the TUC is beginning to grapple with the problem. □

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What do these people do?

Britain's security services constitute a large and powerful special interest. Can it be controlled? And how? Two commentators who have studied the secret world* — ROBIN COOK MP *and then* PETER HENNESSY — *report on how our spies can be made more accountable

IT IS A measure of the furtive nature of the British security services that even the statute book of parliament appears oblivious to them. The sole recognition of the clandestine arm of the state is to be found in the ancient Civil List and Secret Service Money Act of 1782. This prudent piece of legislation sought to restrain the executive from abuse by providing that 'it shall not be lawful to issue for the purpose of secret services within this kingdom, any sums of money which in the whole shall exceed ten thousand pounds in any one year'.

Delightfully, this statute was never revoked until 1977, by which time the Secret Vote exceeded £30m annually. It would appear probable that the budget of MI5 has been in breach of this law in every year from its inception in 1909.

Repeal of the ceiling on their expenditure may have removed from the security services doubts as to the propriety of their budget, but it also expunged from the statute book the only legal authority for their existence. This point is not merely a matter of legal nicety. Logically, it is difficult to see how parliament can establish structures to render accountable security services which are not recognised by parliament. Nor is it possible for any system of scrutiny to establish whether the security services have exceeded their functions so long as their role is nowhere defined in law.

In the wake of the revelations concerning Sir Anthony Blunt I did make the attempt of presenting a bill which would give the state the legal authority to maintain security services, but only for specific purposes and subject to external scrutiny. Predictably the bill was blocked by the government at the first available opportunity, but its main bones were subsequently absorbed into the proposals of Labour's Security Services Study Group, whose report to the NEC was immediately buried by the 1983 general election and has never surfaced again.

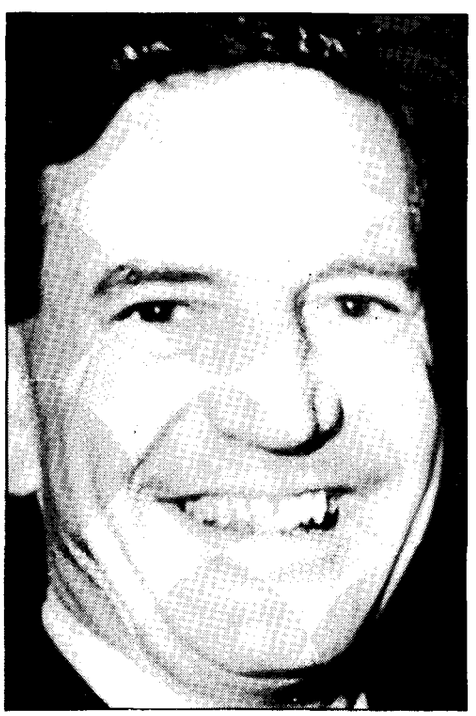
What are they for?

The first task of any bill to regulate the security services must be to define their purpose. The advantage of giving expression in law to their functions is that it is inconceivable that any legal authority for their activities could sanction surveillance by them of actions which are not in themselves unlawful. This brings us to the heart of the debate over the security services, since all we have learnt of their activities over the past two decades confirms that they are no longer primarily concerned with halting espionage by foreign agents but with monitoring their notion of subversion among British residents.

A revealing glimpse of how they see their role is provided by the conduct of Sir Howard Trayton Smith on being recalled from Ambassador in Moscow to be appointed head of MI5. His response was to pay a courtesy call on his Russian hosts to advise them of his new appointment, although no British paper was permitted to share the news with the public. Today's security services are not pitted against the KGB, they parallel it in the surveillance of their domestic population — a much more elastic function which has lent itself to endless expansion of their personnel pursuing ever-widening interpretations of subversion.

There is no such thing as a legal offence of subversion. The Home Office has filled this gap with a definition of subversion as 'activities which are intended to undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means'. This extensive definition provides carte blanche for the security services to busy themselves with any political organisation they find distasteful or any industrial action that is likely to be effective. By contrast the essential gain from supplying a legislative basis for the security services is that it would confine them to the legitimate objectives of detecting real offences — espionage, terrorism or sabotage.

The next task is to provide a check on the methods of surveillance employed by the security services. The most obvious step here is to terminate the present cosy arrangement by which the executive in the shape of Home Secretary is empowered to grant warrants for the tapping of telephones and the interception of mail to another manifestation of the same executive in the shape of the security services. A prudent constraint on



All photos: Camera Press

'The security services are no longer primarily concerned with halting espionage by foreign agents (or double agents, like Burgess, Philby and Maclean, above from left to right) but with monitoring their notion of subversion among British residents'

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abuse of this power would be to require the security services to obtain a judicial warrant for such surveillance and to specify the offence which may be detected by it.

THE OTHER technical resource of the security services which invited external scrutiny is their use of computers. The advent of computer technology was probably more responsible than any policy decision in transforming the present security services into agents of domestic surveillance, as it enabled them to open files in numbers beyond the wildest aspirations of their predecessors. Informed estimates conclude that MI5 maintains a computer entry on two million citizens, which grotesquely exceeds any plausible number of residents who may be regarded as security risks. A periodic review by a judge or other independent assessor would ensure regular weeding and inhibit the tendency of such systems to organic growth.

The police could do it

Finally it is necessary firmly to anchor these provisions into parliamentary accountability. The method I hit upon was to adopt the impeccably respectable device of the then legislation on the armed forces which required annual renewal. Nobody would expect the security services to lapse on a year-to-year basis, but the legal requirement for renewal would supply an annual opportunity for parliament to reflect on their conduct in the preceding year, preferably on the basis of a report disclosing the scale of their activities such as the number of warrants or computer entries.

Revisiting the controversy five years on, I am moved to ask whether it would not be simpler merely to legislate for the abolition of the security services. Chewing through the extensive leaks of Mr Wright's forthcoming book it is tempting to conclude that the government wants to ban it because it finally establishes that MI5 provides no discernible service to the public, even in the intervals between swapping personnel with the Russians and destabilising democratically elected governments. The police force could prove no worse in detecting espionage and might be more difficult for the other side to penetrate.

In the event that Labour naturally recoils from rendering a staff of 4,000 redundant, we should at a minimum bring their status within the law and their activities under external scrutiny. □

Robin Cook MP is Labour front bench spokesperson on trade.

Intelligence oversight

FOR THOSE who think there is no problem about controlling the British security and intelligence services, that the chain of accountability is as familiar as it is banal — the secret services are accountable to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister is accountable to Parliament — the following exchange is indispensable reading. It took place in Committee Room 6 in the House of Commons at an open session of the all-party Treasury and Civil Service Committee on 12 February this year. Austin Mitchell is in the chair, the witness James Callaghan.

Mr Mitchell: Are you satisfied that the security services are sufficiently accountable to ministers and Parliament, but primarily ministers and the Prime Minister?

Mr Callaghan: I am not sure what its accountability is to Parliament, I am not sure about ministers. I find it a difficult question to answer, I really do. They are run — the security services and MI5 and MI6 — as separate departments. They are not in the Minister's office, as it were, not in his headquarters. There is, therefore, all the difficulty of physical separation. When the Minister has to up sticks to ask questions and go somewhere else, that makes for remoteness. There is not immediate day to day closeness. Some Ministers do not want to know a lot: Home Secretary or Foreign Secretary, Prime Minister, others want to know a great deal about what is going on. I am going to give you a very unsatisfactory anwer, I do not know. I am certain there must be a very high degree of responsibility among those who serve in MI5 or MI6 because they have great powers, considerable powers and I think the ethos of those particular services is probably as important as the degree of accountability that you can visit upon them. I am very, very mixed up about this, I do not think I can help you with this.

Mr Mitchell: There are allegations that the services are out of control. There are allegations in respect of Sir Harold Wilson they were actually plotting against Sir Harold Wilson and the Labour Government and the allegation about them being out of control comes up from time to time; are you satisfied the Prime Minister has sufficient control of them?

Mr Callaghan: I think that depends on whether the Prime Minister exercises such control. I do not know what the word 'out of control' means, honestly I really do not. If it means do they take initiatives of their own kind without clearing everything with a minister, if it means that, the answer is yes, of course they do take such initiatives. If it means they undertake actions that they believe would be rejected if put to a minister, I would say that within my experience that is not so to that extent, therefore they would not be out of control. They sometimes put to a minister actions which they think he will regard as repugnant but nevertheless they hope he will agree and the answer will be yes. Then it depends on the minister, whether he is sufficiently alert to say no to those particular questions.

Mr Callaghan is remembered in Whitehall as being assiduous and sensible on security matters. When vacancies occurred in the headship of a secret agency he would as Prime Minister take a great deal of trouble over the appointment, on the ground that the director-general set the ethos, the tone for the whole organisation which, in themselves, were the crucial barrier to malpractice in the lower ranks. It should be recalled, too, that as Home Secretary and later Foreign Secretary he had held individual ministerial responsibility for MI5 and MI6. For him of all people to have displayed such open confusion before the Whitehall committee on the accountability question is significant indeed.

The position on which one bases an oversight is determined by a range of factors: whether you believe the Cold War is real (if you don't, the bulk of the *raison d'être* of the secret services, terrorism apart, evaporates); whether you believe that affronts to individual liberty, excessive surveillance, cavalier use of phone tapping, are the chief abuses to be checked; whether you believe that a stiffer resistance to KGB penetration is the priority; and now, thanks to the claims emanating from a Sydney courtroom, whether you believe that no Crown servant should be in the business of contemplating the subversion of a democratically elected government.

My own reason for wanting an oversight

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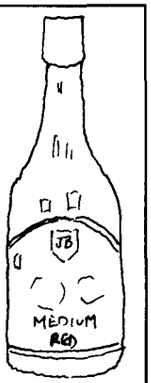

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Set Jim Callaghan to catch future Anthony Blunts (above)?

arrangement is a mixture of all of these and one other: resolving what one might call the Cathy Massiter problem — to whom can an insider, alarmed by the anti-democratic activity he or she perceives within the service, turn once internal complaint has failed? There must surely be a half-way-house between private unease and the airing of that unease on Channel 4 Television.

THE STARTING POINT for me is the Cold War. Regrettably, it *is* real and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Top class intelligence is crucial if the intentions of the other side are to be assessed correctly and the transition to a hot war avoided. Britain only has a limited amount of money, manpower and equipment to deploy on intelligence. It must be used efficiently for purposes whose priority can change without those engaged in the business realising it as quickly as they might. Oversight should serve as a constant efficiency audit. Terrorism is another constant. Any goad to greater effectiveness here is to be welcomed.

Wright's grand obsession

Counter-intelligence, defence against penetration by the other side, is another *idée fixe*. It has to be. But it can become all-encompassing. It is the grand obsession of Peter Wright and those counter-intelligence specialists who subscribe to the theory of the defector, Anatoliy Golitsyn, that only because the West was so penetrated could the Soviet Union hoodwink us into believing that Tito ever split from the Cominform or, more importantly, that China and Russia ever fell out. If you accept his thesis — that the West's secret interpreters of the East's intentions have consistently misled their ministerial customers — you are prone to see KGB or GRU agents everywhere, including the top. Oversight in this area has two purposes: to apply fresh minds to problems which tend to obsess and then distort the minds of some full-time professionals; and to act as a court of appeal on issues which wrack the secret world with fundamental disagreement.

Other oversight functions include British specialities, such as Northern Ireland, the Falklands or Belize. The maintenance of the special intelligence relationship with the Americans, Canada and Australia is, if you stand where I do on the Cold War, crucial to the British operation. The civil liberty question, keeping surveillance to a minimum in an open society, is another vital aspect that no oversight body should lose sight of.

That body, I think, should be a Standing Royal Commission on Security and Intelligence. It would serve this multitude of needs better than a select committee of privy councillors as it could call upon the services of experienced men and women who do not happen to be MPs or peers. Its composition would be changeable and could reflect the priority questions of the day. By its very existence it would have a cleansing effect. Suspicion that one day the Royal Commission might unearth their skulduggery could deter the cowboy element from private operations that give the whole business a bad name. The Royal Commission, if it is to have any value, would have to enjoy rights comparable to the United States Senate Intelligence Committee to investigate operations. It would meet in secret but report annually to Parliament.

Indeed, the first task of the Royal Commission should be fact-finding missions to countries with oversight such as the United States, West Germany and Australia. The commissioners should have a say in writing their standing terms of reference and should do so, given their initial travels, on an informed basis.

Who should make up the Royal Commission? A proportion of the existing Security Commission which for 22 years has investigated spy scandals after the event. The new body would incorporate that function. One or two former defence, home and foreign secretaries, found on an all-party basis, should comprise the parliamentary ingredient. One or two former members of the Permanent Secretaries Intelligence Steering Committee (Whitehall's existing internal oversight on budgets) would have much to contribute. One or two former agency men could be of great value on the poacher-turned-gamekeeper principle. At least two independent outsiders with no experience to represent the public interest (if you made it three, Labour, Conservative and Alliance leaders could nominate each other). The chairman? Mr Callaghan picks himself — inside knowledge, a stature above his party label and, given his evidence to the Mitchell committee, a man whose mind has not hardened into certainties on this question.

Peter Hennessy is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute.

FAR RIGHT

Privatised politics

THE BRITISH Foreign Office is corrupt, the CIA run by leftists. The salvation of the world from international communism therefore lies with private military and political institutes and those are springing up in healthy, well-funded abundance. The various speakers at last weekend's Conference for a Free Nicaragua (ie gunning for a contra military victory in Nicaragua) shared this world view, though a thicket of security measures ensured that no one who might disagree with them got to hear it.

The number of organisations in Britain who now want to entrench this view is considerable, though the individuals involved are often the same. Many of those attending came from the Federation of Conservative Students, which had its annual grant of £30,000 from the Conservative Party chopped this year. Their views had become a public embarrassment. Also active at the conference were members of the Libertarian Alliance, founded by Chris Tame who is also secretary of the Adam Smith Club and chaired the Sunday afternoon session. Gerald Hartup of the Freedom Association and an energetic organiser against the miners' strike in 1984-85 turned up to ask friendly questions.

Brian Crozier, founder of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, spoke on Saturday about the international conference organised by Aims of Industry on fighting subversion. Brian Crozier is one of the four founder of the Sherwood Press which two weeks ago published *Anti-Racism: an assault on education and value*, a collection of right-wing attacks on anti-racist education.

One of the few lively speakers at the weekend's conference was Sir Alfred Sherman, one time director of studies at the Centre of Policy Studies. In between asides about 'bongo-bongo land' — the right's codeword for Africa — he both attacked the Foreign Office for living in a colonial past and refusing to recognise Britain was now part of Europe, and for having far too many officials in Europe and not enough in Central America.

Charles Lichenstein, who served for three years as Reagan's deputy ambassador to the UN but now is Senior Fellow for the Heritage Foundation, livened up in an attack on 'that jackass called Scandinavia' (insufficiently aware of the threat of world communism). His compatriot, Francis Bouchy, President of the Council for Inter-American Security, only became passionate when he leant forward to urge the audience to feel confident that we are part of a 'superior civilisation' — the key belief for taking the initiative in fighting communism.

Conference organisers David Hoile and Marc Gordon insisted that none of the high costs of the conference had come from the USA or Heritage Foundation. They had all been met by individual British businessmen, they said. The costs included the Barbican's Cinema 3 (£1,032 for two days), and flying in delegates for the European Democratic (right-wing) Students conference, who got their EDS conference expenses in full on condition they also came to the Nicaragua conference. The Conference for a Free Nicaragua used the Park Lane Hotel, which normally costs £400 for the press room and £120 a night for a double room.

Sarah Benton

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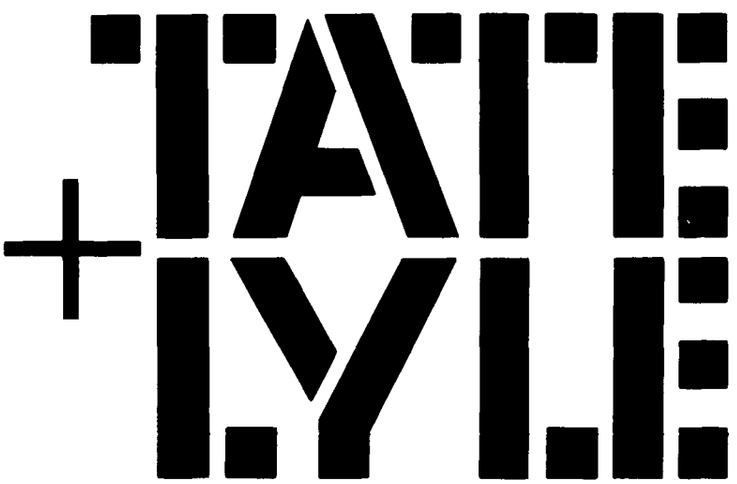

Record profits in an eventful year

Chairman and Chief Executive, Neil Shaw, reports:

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- Profitable first year for Western Sugar Company. Two additional beet plants acquired.
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- Prospects are both challenging and exciting.

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

	1986	1985
Turnover	**£1,645m**	£1,627m
Profit before tax	**£81.5m**	£76.7m
Profit after tax attributable to shareholders*	**£39.7m**	£38.1m
Earnings per share	**57.3p**	55.3p
Dividends per share	**23.0p**	22.0p
Dividend cover	**2.5 times**	2.5 times

*Before extraordinary loss £12.9m (1985: £11.6m)

Preliminary announcement of results for the period ended 27th September 1986.

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We must not plead a delusion

Last week the* New Statesman *published a leading article which argued that Labour's commitment to independent nuclear disarmament is so damaging to its electoral chances, and to NATO and world security, that it should be abandoned by the leadership. Having read the leader after publication, the editorial staff of the magazine expressed their strong disagreement with this view to the editor. We agreed to present our objections this week

THE EDITORIAL staff of the *New Statesman* do not agree with the leading article in last week's paper. We do not share the editor's assessment of the effect of Labour's policy for unilateral disarmament on its chances of winning the next election, nor do we share his assessment of its effects on NATO or the USA. A defence policy is also made for reasons of political democracy and morality, and we think the editorial was wrong wholly to ignore these.

Many of us do have criticisms of aspects of Labour's defence policy. There is a persuasive argument that these should not be raised before the next election. Defence was Labour's major weakness at the last election, not so much because of the policy itself as because the party was daily, visibly disunited about it. It was similar disunity in the Alliance that recently sent it plunging in the opinion polls. However, it is not the first job of the *New Statesman* to 'be helpful' to the Labour Party and so the fact and the timing of this public disagreement with Labour is not the point at issue.

We think that Labour's defence policy can win enough electoral support to, at the least, not hinder its electoral chances. For many, it is Labour's commitment to independent nuclear disarmament which is its chief political asset. If we rely on opinion polls for our guide, we know that in the recent past a majority of electors have expressed their support for one or other part of this policy (cancelling Trident, getting rid of cruise missiles) and a sizeable minority have supported all of it. A growing number are, rightly, extremely worried about the use by the American government of its bases in the UK for purposes which have nothing to do with Britain's foreign policy or the defence of Britain or Western Europe. Popular fear of the effects of accidental nuclear explosions — civil or military — increased after the accident at Chernobyl.

We think Labour's defence policy could thus win majority support. Labour's task is first to recognise popular fears of the imminence of nuclear destruction, on the one hand, and the fear of aggression and oppression from abroad, on the other. Then, to show — through a vigorous political campaign — that both fears can be reconciled by a policy whose objects are to achieve peace and mutual security at much lower levels of nuclear armament on each side. We think a vigorous campaign could, rather than being highly defensive, show the political potential of an historic break with a defence policy of threatened joint suicide, a policy which has been untouched by the two decades of 'negotiation' by the superpowers.

Time for Britain to join NATO's majority

To argue that a commitment to a policy for independent nuclear disarmament jeopardises NATO is merely to argue that no genuine change in the status quo is possible. This is obviously not true. Canada and Spain, both NATO members, got rid of their nuclear weapons. France expelled *all* US bases (nuclear or not) nearly 25 years ago. Greece proposes to follow. Norway and Denmark have never accepted US bases at all. Excluding the United States itself, Britain is in a minority, among NATO countries, in retaining US nuclear weapons. By joining the majority of NATO countries, Britain will help to demonstrate how the status quo can start to change in favour of greater security for both sides. Britain would be part of a far more effective force for multilateral disarmament than it can be if its government continues to insist that no change is possible unless the USA makes the first move.

We are under no illusions that a British government could rid the country of nuclear weapons overnight, and we accept that preventing the American government from using British bases for nuclear missiles will involve a protracted period of negotiation. But the difficulty of the process is no argument for refusing to initiate it.

We think that to plead a special relationship with the USA and therefore a special influence for good over its foreign policy is to plead a delusion. Mrs Thatcher's special relationship — which is far more special than anything a Labour Prime Minister is likely to achieve — has had no moderating influence on Reagan whatsoever. It did not stop his administration from invading Grenada or from using British bases to bomb Libya, or from playing a highly hazardous role in the Middle East or Central America. It has not checked the drive to create Star Wars or stopped Reagan from deliberately breaking the last SALT treaty's limits on cruise missiles. Mrs Thatcher's subservience to President Reagan may have earned her lavish praise from him. It has done nothing to enhance Britain's stature or influence in Western Europe where, as the editorial points out, Britain's future lies.

We take seriously the fear that if Britain joins those Western European countries now pulling away from an institutionalised arms race this will strengthen the isolationists in the USA. But this argument is petulant blackmail from that minority of Americans who want to ensure that Western Europe services the USA's own interest in preserving the Cold War. If we bow to it, we are saying that it is quite beyond the peoples of Britain, Western Europe or the USA to construct policies which are far more likely to ensure peace and security than those which the cliques of reactionary and unaccountable spooks, arms sellers and politicians have to offer.

THIS BRINGS us to the arguments which the editorial ignores. A chief criterion for defence policy is that it be open to democratic, popular involvement. 'No more secret diplomacy' was one of the few popular demands to come out of the First World War. The possession of nuclear weapons and the establishment of American nuclear bases in Britain has enormously increased the secrecy surrounding Britain's defence policy.

The growth of CND in the last eight years has been one of the few invigorating political forces in a country where so many are dispirited by the lack of political ideas and a widespread helplessness about the nuclear threat. It is the peace movements, among which CND holds a leading position, which have done more than any government to force defence into its proper position as a central issue of public policy and done more than any other body to force governments to take seriously the popular desire for nuclear disarmament. The fact that this campaign has been for unilateral nuclear disarmament certainly does not mean that people have turned their backs on multilateral disarmament. It means that citizens of this country will press their government to do what it can do independently to reduce the world's highly hazardous accumulation of nuclear weapons and to break the stalemate on arms reduction.

We at the *New Statesman* are proud of the paper's historic role in this process of helping British citizens to know about and be involved in defence policy. This paper published the first article by J. B. Priestley in 1957 which led to the founding of CND, and published the seminal article by E. P. Thompson in 1979, attacking the 'doomsday' politics of current defence thinking, which led to the founding of the campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament in 1980. Politics have moved forward since those inspiring initiatives for both unilateral and multilateral disarmament — the two are not incompatible. We are opposed to those proposals which panic when historic change is at last in sight and seek to return to a bygone era of popular passivity while a handful of those in power continue to decide nuclear policy in secret. □

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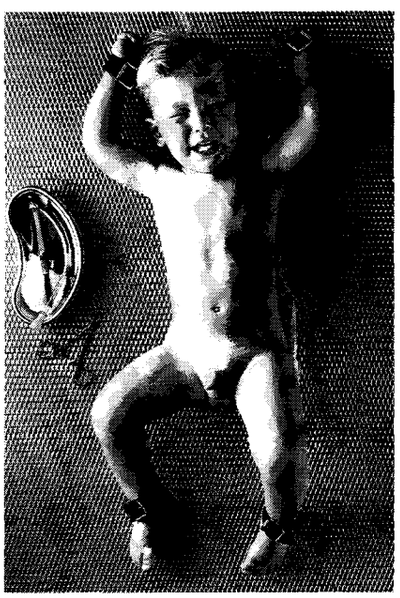

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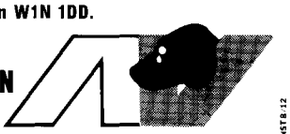

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SOUTHERN AFRICA

Shooting baddies in Mozambique

THE LONG drawn-out struggle between the black majority-ruled states of Southern Africa and the Pretoria regime has thrown many strange friends together. Yet the British Army is currently training troops to fight the rebel RENAMO — backed by South Africa and created in 1976 by the Rhodesian army.

On a recent visit to Zimbabwe, I stumbled upon several British officers relaxing off-duty from training Mozambicans at the Zimbabwe National Army Base at Inyanga. Major Crawford, the British military attaché in Harare, was happy to explain that they are part of a seven-man team — one commanding officer, one major, three captains and two warrant officers — now putting their third group of Mozambicans through a 12 week officer training course. A team of British ex-SAS experts is also training Mozambican commandos at the military base at Manhica.

One reason for the unexpectedly friendly relationship between London and Maputo is that Mrs T was a great admirer of the late president Samora Machel. According to Major Crawford, the feeling was mutual — Machel thought her the best Prime Minister for 15 years. What did Crawford think of the British Army training 'Marxist' FRELIMOS? He acknowledged that he and his men were a political tool, but 'we purposely blinker ourselves to the job we are given. Soldiers are apolitical'.

Major Crawford was tight-lipped about how successful the Brits had been in transforming the ragged Mozambican army into officers. 'They are all to a man enthusiastic and keen to learn. Their experience varies greatly. Some have been out shooting baddies for a long time, others have never even seen a gun.'

Zimbabwean soldiers — there are now some 12,000 fighting in Mozambique — are not so polite about the FRELIMO troops, citing an incident in the Gorongosa region when they recaptured Cassa Banana, the MNR headquarters, and handed it over to the Mozambicans who were overrun and routed by the rebels shortly afterwards.

The latest reports — that the 20,000-strong MNR plan to slice Mozambique in two from the north, setting up a new headquarters in Quelimane — are alarming, but not fantastic.

During my stay in Manica Province in Mozambique (south of the Beira corridor) only a wire fence lay between us and MNR-controlled country. All the surrounding villages suffered frequent attacks by the 'bandidos' who specialise in burning down houses, chopping off ears and noses, and hacking people into little bits. In Mozambique, I was immediately struck by the difference in appearance between the well-fed Zimbabwean troops and the tiny, malnourished Mozambicans with no boots.

During the protracted six-year war, tens of thousands of civilians are estimated to have died at the hands of the bandits and many more to have been maimed. The busiest factory in Maputo is said to be the one producing artificial limbs. About 300,000 people have fled to neighbouring countries and the number of people at risk from hunger or disease has risen from two and a half million in 1985 to three and a half million. Schools and health clinics are singled out as special targets by the bandits.

It is impossible to say what recovery the country would have made from drought which killed 100,000 people and floods which washed away homes and roads in the early '80s, had it not been for the war. But sheer desperation forced Machel to sign the ill-fated Nkomati Accord with South Africa in 1984, and a broken economy sent him to the IMF and the World Bank for assistance. Major Crawford thinks Machel was beginning to lean to the West ideologically as well. 'He'd had a bellyfull of Marxism and was holding out a hand of friendship to the West. His death was a bloody disaster.'

Alison Whyte

DEPORTATION

A victim of ignorance

FOR THE LAST six months until last week a journalist was locked up in Pentonville Prison. He was accused of no crime. He was not an illegal immigrant. He was not — and no one suggested he was — insane. Throughout his incarceration, no word of his predicament appeared in the British press. How could this happen?

Nasri Hajjaj is a 35-year-old Palestinian who was born in the Ain el Hilwek refugee camp near Sidon in South Lebanon. He came to London in 1979 to study for an MA at Middlesex Polytechnic. He married an Englishwoman in 1981 and they shared a house in Brixton.

As a refugee, he had been trying for many years to be granted a permanent residency. He had work — first with the Libyan news agency JANA, then with a Gulf paper in west London. In April this year he heard that his mother was sick. He was given permission to visit her.

However, when he tried to fly back in May he was excluded as a risk to 'national security'; he was granted permission to enter the country to contest his exclusion but only if he remained in prison. He was allowed to put his case to the Home Secretary's security advisers — the famous 'Three Wise Men.'

Veterans of security cases will remember those Three Wise Men from another case some ten years ago, when another journalist, Mark Hosenball and a former CIA man, Philip Agee, were deported after an appeal to them. Agee's revelations of CIA corruption have been proven, and Hosenball now works for the *Sunday Times*. From what Hajjaj could gather — the accused is never told why he is a security risk — the two main allegations against him were that he had contacts with a Palestinian organisation and that he had been involved in 'clandestine negotiations with members of the IRA'.

Firstly, like most Palestinians, Hajjaj has connections with a group or groups that are opposed to the occupation of Palestine, but has always been open about his views and has never advocated violence. Second, Hajjaj interviewed members of the IRA in 1983. He was also the first Arab journalist to interview Gerry Adams. His IRA article appeared, signed, in a Beirut daily. It was accompanied by a photo of Hajjaj and an IRA man. Any journalist trying to write about Northern Ireland will try to contact members of the paramilitaries of either side and it is not uncommon for them to be photographed beside the person they are interviewing. This article, it seems, was the grounds for the 'clandestine negotations' suggestion.

The timing of his exclusion is the key to his story. It came when there was a large 'anti-terrorist' drive and when Arabs could be described as pigs in the papers. The Palestinians have, in some sections of the media and politics, become synonymous with 'terrorism'. Hajjaj is quite simply a victim of that ignorance and that hysteria.

We exerted ourselves mightily over journalist Nicholas Daniloff in Moscow. How outrageous that a journalist — that slightly-more-important-than-anyone-else breed — should be locked up (even if, as it later transpired, he did a spot of odd-jobbing for the CIA). Nasri Hajjaj has no President waiting to slap his shoulder and call him Nas. His departure and the manner of it are as shameful as those of Agee and Hosenball and should be on record as such.

Duncan Campbell

Duncan Campbell will be writing on Home Affairs for the London Daily News *which will be launched on 10 February. He is not the Duncan Campbell on the* New Statesman *staff.*

INDIA

War on graft

New Delhi

India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has defied the rules of Indian politics in launching and maintaining a campaign against the corruption which has grown up over the past four decades round the nexus of political, bureaucratic and business life. In the past 18 months, some 6,000 raids have resulted in 2,000 of India's elite facing trial. The raids continue, though there is presently a three-month amnesty to allow law breakers to declare their overseas assets and pay taxes. A recent IMF study showed that Indians were holding nearly $1.1bn in secret Swiss bank accounts: this has vindicated the actions of Finance Minister Viswanath Pratap Singh, now the most feared man in India among sections of the bourgeoisie.

Gandhi has ordered his Congress Party — of which is President — not to accept further donations from business circles: a recent $800m pipeline contract went ostentatiously to a West German-French consortium, and *not* to an Italian company whose New Delhi representative was a friend of the Prime Minister's.

Opposition parties and business leaders have been unable to protest for fear of being seen to protect corruption, and the Lok Sabha (lower house) will end the current session next week on a dull and contention-free winter session — just how any government likes it.

Gandhi's popularity is presently high: but he is daring to change the face of India's politics, and he will find opposition massing on the way. For the moment, the disgruntled and the corrupt alike can only silently watch as the Prime Minister carries away the masses.

K. V. S. Rama Sarma

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(DOWN BUT NOT OUT IN) LONDON DIARY

I suspect that, like our own dear Cabinet Secretary, professional diarists incline towards economy with their Truths, though some of them are enjoyably less economical than others. Or perhaps they're less selective? Certainly Pepys, Joe Orton and Frank Harris were of the owning-up persuasion. But one wonders if even they, who solicitously commit each sexual act — ledger-like — to paper, would itemise their haemorrhoids or their mean-spirited, mundane thoughts with a similar honesty?

Legitimate diary-writers (and here I mean those keeping intimate daily journals with eyes cocked neither on posterity nor a publisher's advance) are an extremely baffling bunch. What masochistic motives impel chancing future anguish by documenting details about the folly-laden present? Given that the secret of a happy life is good health and a talent for amnesia, who would *wish* to recollect this year's emotion, political or personal, in what otherwise could prove next year's tranquility?

My own diary, a Filofax (and I promise you, you're not allowed to take up residence here in Wandsworth Common without one) contains nothing save appointment times and venues and can hardly be described as a vibrant record of a glittering social year. The only regular entries appear fortnightly, when the words 'SIGN ON' are writ in a suitably abject script and, monthly, when the date is circled with a relieved and heavy pen, indicating what is often the sole event worth noting.

○

Occasionally, however, miracles occur and the workless tedium is broken by a bout of freelance radio broadcasting for the BBC External Services. Forget that speculative tittle-tattle about bias being rife high among Auntie's Upper Echelons. Take it from me — the *real* investigative, heavy-duty grillings have long been centred at ground level, immediately inside each elaborate portal. Here, the security staff are literally uniformly sweet but one is, nevertheless, smilingly encouraged to produce an identity card, a faded love letter from Lord Reith and a specimen of urine before entry is permitted.

These rigorous attentions were apparently yet more stringent during '39 to '45, when Nation Was Speaking Warfare Unto Nation. Legend has it that an exiled king arrived in the hallowed hallways at a pre-appointed hour, anxious to address the folks back home via the magic of the ether. An attendant blocked the royal path. Still unconvinced, despite a long interrogation, he phoned the waiting studio, breaking off mid-sentence to double-check his facts: 'Er, excuse me guv, *where* is it that you're king of?'

There is, I'm told, a most convivial bar buried deep within Bush House's winding entrails. But fearful that, before one drink is served, you are obliged to sit a fingerprint and lie-detector test, if not a small examination of a gynaecological nature, I opt instead for a subsidised, yummy lunch in the canteen. Sadly, this gastronomic cavern, immortalised in Orwell's *1984*, singularly fails to strike me as a potential hot-bed of media sedition. The only subversive mutterings that assail my straining ears involve outraged threats of revolution every time the price of coffee is increased. Of course, I may just be a party-pooping pessimist. Perhaps all those silver-templed besuited Oxbridge toffs, engrossed with their *FT*s and *Telegraph*s and semolina puds, are founder members of the Apostles and idealistic, active moles. But I dispiritedly report that, to this outsider's red and eager eye, they look suspiciously like contented members of the Carlton.

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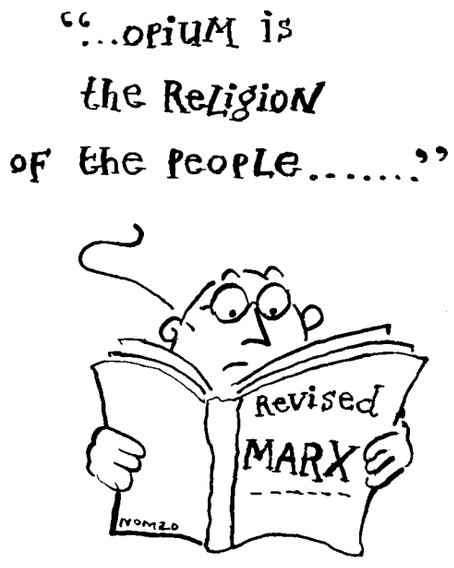

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When I'm finally inside the studio (a feat achieved by displaying a passport, written references from Milne, Tusa and 'Duke' Hussey and a current copy of the *Reader's Digest*) I am paid to pursue my most passionate obsession, namely inundating innocent strangers with deeply personal questions. What I'm after, I suppose, is a verbal diary of their lives. And, confronted by my *irresistible* brand of gentle, unctuous charm, interviewees have been known to crack under the total lack of pressure and to wax very uneconomical indeed. I once asked a droll American author to divulge his worst mistake. He promptly named her . . .

Along with every other bloody thing, asking questions differs in Art from how it is in Life. *On* mike, the willing victim gradually forgets the studio hardware and relaxes, becoming progressively, and astonishingly, ever revelatory. *Off* mike, that is in a purely social context, I have found, and often to my cost, that Truths are only spoken for the first ten minutes following the initial introduction. Thus, we all have 600 seconds, only, always, ever, of unguarded sincerity from another human being. After that, my dears, the rot of caution and convention resets firmly in, and for the next 50 years we are destined to hear, at best, what people *think* they think or, much, much, worse, what people think you *want* to think they think.

○

The greatest joy about being about Bush House is that a vast number of one's fellow inmates are palpably not English. I know not whether this is Experience or menopausal Disaffection but, at the age of 40, I have unashamedly embraced chronic anglophobia. We English are the apathetic *pits* and therefore, logically, possess the politicians, press, proprietors, public services and plummeting reputation we deserve. Though *those* sentiments are written on a national-characteristic shrug, the ones which follow carry the impotent fury of a dance of death; for what we *still* possess, but only just, is a far *better* British Broadcasting Corporation than the one which we deserve. And — let me sock it to you — one whose objectivity *still* excites the trust and envy of the world. However, past governments have *all* had half a mind to mould the Beeb into a well-tuned, tune-in machine of propaganda and I am confident that this present despotic shower will eventually succeed in doing it.

○

To continue with the spleen: compulsory Xmas holiday reading should be the text of David Hare's play, *Plenty*, dealing, as it does, with post-war history, disintegrating ideals and values, and that sinister and shudder-making English Art Form — the language and the practice of Diplomacy. Here's one of Hare's cracking appended notes: 'To me, when an actor asks why he does something, it is a perfectly good answer to say "Because you are English". Irony is central to English humour and as a people we are cruel to each other, but always quietly.' I shall think of that while swapping softly murmured sallies across the turkey and mince pies.

And now, as Yuletide's almost here, I have the vexsome task of closing with a greeting that avoids complete hypocrisy. A heartfelt 'Bah!' or 'Humbug!' might lack a certain warmth so, mindful of Economy and Truth, I hope you'll forgive me if I simply settle for wishing us all a *considerably* happier Xmas than the one we're probably in for . . .

Diana Eden

ROGER WODDIS

French with tears

'In short '86 is '68 spelt backwards.' — Guardian

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques,
Do you sleep? Do you sleep?
Are the bells conveying what the world is saying?
As ye sow, shall ye reap.

When the blind are deaf to reason,
No one gains, no one learns.
Batons in the morning give an early warning,
Through the night Paris burns.

Turning back the clock of progress
Mocks the name of reform;
Iron fists and leather won't delay the weather,
Nor will guns calm the storm.

In the hallowed halls of learning
Logic now hangs a plaque;
'Call it medieval, popular upheaval
In the end taught Chirac.'

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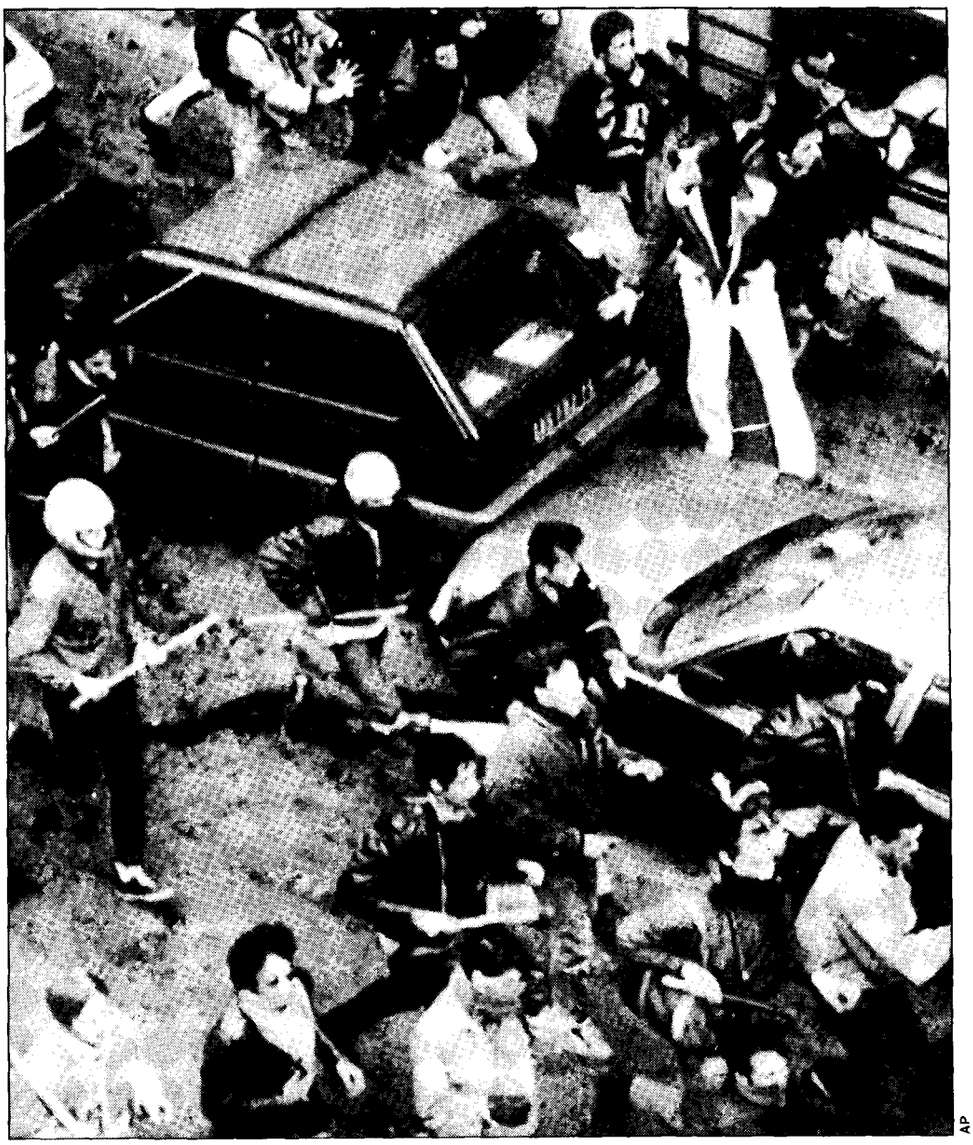
Winter of '86

French students have taken to the streets again. It's not a repeat of '68 but, writes* YVETTE MARIN *from Paris, it could be a more fundamental defence of the republican values. On p.16* DAVID BODANIS *argues that the students were fighting to protect themselves against further stratification of the education system



AP

The ones in helmets are students too — somehow the fashion never caught on in Britain

I WAS AMONG the May '68 revolutionaries — Trotskyists, Communists, Maoists. We refused the parental models of a well-ordered life stuck in a strict hierarchy of power. We couldn't decently throw stones at our fathers or grandfathers, so we battled against those symbols of order: police and professors.

Quite a number of stone throwers have now replaced their elders in the establishment and in universities, where they now teach their own children. I am among *them*, too. Although it is tempting to draw a parallel between the '68 and the '86 events, and see history repeating itself, it should be avoided. Times have changed: and not for the better, as it was hoped. The 'ex-students-now-teachers' have retained their political dream (although their fight for power is mainly inside the universities); while new students proclaim their distrust for any organised political party. So how can this rebellion of today be explained?

The French educational system has followed the basic principles of the 1789 revolution: it is state-run and free. No formal selection bars the access to university. As long as you possess a 'baccalaureat' (A level exams) you qualify to register where you want.

This is a growing problem: the increase of a young population plus the lack of professional perspectives for school-leavers and a 70 per cent nationwide success at the 'Bac' means that more and more students flock to further education. Universities cannot expand indefinitely: some of them are now small towns in themselves. Jussieu in Paris, where I teach, is one of the largest universities in France. It annually registers 35,000 students and the number increases every year. Numerous problems are therefore raised: the physical limits of classes, the quality of education if you lecture to hundreds through a microphone, and the huge number of failures among the students (for all sections at Jussieu the rate of failure at the first year exam is 70 per cent). Further, most university degrees do not now help to get a job. So, in recent years governments of left and right have tried to reduce these losses.

Our now famous minister of the universities, Alain Devaquet (himself a former teacher at Jussieu), brought into power by Chirac's party, the RPR, planned a law aimed at cutting costs by cutting numbers. Devaquet was artistically vague in his new formulations, but three main points surfaced:

1. selection before entering university;
2. a registration fee;
3. The replacement of state degrees (the same vaue all over France) by university diplomas (their value would vary according to the reputation of each university).

Although this law had been planned last July, it didn't create many waves among the university professionals, divided as they are into castes based on privileges (at the top you work less and earn more, and at the bottom it is the reverse — in between, all sorts of variations exist). Moreover, they were tired of so many reforms enforced every two years or so, (the socialist 'loi savary' was still being implemented), bringing more and more chaos inside the university world. A few one-day strikes were voted by the teachers' union, without much conviction.

Everyone was therefore surprised when, on 24 November, two weeks before this law was due to pass, a majority of students came into their classes and informed their lecturers that they themselves decided on a strike, calmly explaining that they refused the new law and demanded its annulment. In less than a fortnight they were organised, shunning 'the help' of political parties, and had succeeded in mounting mobilisation unequalled in the history of French students' movements. They gave a huge demonstration of solidarity — whoever, whatever they were, they refused this law.

WHY? Does this law in itself represent such a major change? My students at Jussieu will tell you

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A symbol of freedom or persecution?

On December 16th 1838 five hundred Boer farmers defeated an army of Zulu warriors. Three thousand Zulu were killed. Their blood so coloured the river beside the Boer camp that the victors, who lost not a single man, have remembered it ever since as the Battle of Blood River.

Afrikaners today still celebrate December 16th as a holy day. The story that, on the eve of the battle a covenant was made with God to give them victory, in return for which they would keep the day holy for all time, is still widely believed among Afrikaners. But an Afrikaner historian, who has researched all the papers of the commander at the battle and his clerk, has found no evidence of the Boers giving such an undertaking.

Many other myths confuse the story of apartheid. All sides, the Africans, Afrikaners, the English-speakers, put about their own justifications. Every day news stories that seem clear and simple build up a picture that for most people is increasingly confusing.

That's why at Granada TV we've looked at the facts and discovered the myths that go to make up the history of apartheid. Four programmes called **Apartheid,** on ITV next Tuesday and Wednesday, at 9.00pm and 10.30pm each evening, let the people who made the history and shaped the myths tell their own story.

In presenting the facts Granada TV hope that viewers will see that apartheid is more than just a matter of black and white. And that so too are its solutions.

(Programme notes published in association with New Society are available from Granada TV, Quay St., Manchester).

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that, for example, candidates for engineering sections are already 'selected' for a limited number of places, applicants are chosen according to the class and grade of their 'Bac'. The others will not be refused access to university, but must choose another field of studies, less valued on the job market. Some of them have tried — or will try — to get 'selected' in one of the state 'grandes ecoles' (elitist schools) by sitting for their highly competitive entrance exam.

A fee has *always* been paid on registration at any university. Devaquet simply planned to increase it from 400 FF (£40) to an upper limit of 800 FF (£80) per year: which represents only the price of a good pair of shoes.

Finally, although universities from Marseilles to Lille deliver state degrees, my students also know that it is better to hold a state degree from Jessieu than from most provincial universities.

So why refuse a law which simply enforced existing practices? Because Devaquet put the word 'selection' before access to university. He struck at something essential in the republican ideology: a free and open access to education. Mention to French students the British system of education — private schools, Eton, Oxbridge, the wide acceptance of a class system based on inborn privileges — and they stand up in horror. They accept a difference in hard work and intellectual abilities, but not otherwise.

I have often asked my own students, when they failed their exams and left the university without any diploma, if they regretted their past experience and felt they had wasted their time. They always answered negatively, telling me with a moving enthusiasm how enriching a university experience had been to them, through social and cultural discoveries which they couldn't hope to get at school or in a professional environment.

While elders, ministers, leaders were once more busy with petty quarrels and obsessed with a narrow budget, having forsaken any kind of ideal, they didn't notice that their young were raising their eyes above the muddy legacy of failed policies. Lacking any worthwhile living hero to cherish, growing up in a society accumulating lethal threats, they saw, still written on the front of municipal buildings, the old republican creed: 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. The golden letters were tarnished, but the words made sense to them. If they had given up the utopian prospect of changing a surrounding world devoid of any long-term and worthwhile expectations (to be unemployed, polluted, contaminated, radiated?) they had made the forgotten republican ideal theirs.

The 'Bac' is for French students a passport for hope. Not hope for a job, or a good negotiable degree, but hope for an ideal they had managed to protect. Devaquet has turned the screw too tight and he has been wrong. Social analysts had denounced the 'passivity', the 'apathy' of the young, but failed to observe students in their daily life at university where they, more often than not, applied these republican principles of a moral conscience.

The government has backed off for the present: but if it tries again, as it threatens to do, this moral conscience may turn into a political conscience. The next weeks will tell. □

Yvette Marin is a writer and professor in Paris.

No room at the top

THE YOUNG French girl was terrified. 'Come now,' the man sitting across the metal table from her gently repeated, 'you must know how many people there are in a symphony orchestra.'

The girl had never been to a symphony in her life. Worse, the small-town tutor she had studied with for two years in preparation for this examination had said nothing about her needing to know about symphonies.

'Well?' the man quietly urged.

'Thirty!' she blurted.

'No', he said, not coldly, not cruelly, but still making it clear that she had failed the exam, failed utterly and miserably the one chance she had — for a third year of tutoring her family could not afford — to be received in the one institution in France that guarantees absolute worldly success — l'Ecole Nátionale d'Administration: ENA.

She was not alone. Over 2,300 French citizens apply for the fewer than 150 places each year, and many thousands more wish they had the money to be able to try. The 'failures' go instead to the ordinary universities: the Sorbonne, Montpellier, and others. It is to a great extent because of their failure to get into ENA and the other elite grandes écoles that they are so upset about the reforms Chirac has recently proposed. For students at the Sorbonne know that already they're in the second tier, that just by being there instead of on the ENA track they have already failed. Chirac's proposal of selective entry would divide them further into a third tier, and a fourth, and perhaps worse.

It is to guard against that that they are are demonstrating in the street; it is only by looking closely at the model of ENA out there that we can understand just what is going on — *the unspoken intentions* — in the French educational ruckus.

ENA WAS CREATED in 1946, out of national disgust over the wholesale collaboration of almost all top French administrators with their Nazi conquerors. It was to be a clean break with the past, eliminating the sons of the rich and the aristocracy, and bringing in only the best and untainted brightest.

The new ENA arrivals were special. They were more intelligent than the colleagues they found in the Planning and Finance Minorities, and in the all-powerful Cours des Comptes: they knew they were more intelligent, and above all they trusted each other in a way that no previous bureaucrats ever had. For they — these first ENA graduates — carried the secrets of linear programming and Harvard business efficiency, and they were honestly convinced that with those tools, and enough hard work, they could make France great again, and so make up for the unspeakable shame of June 1940.

It was only natural for them to phone each other in their different ministries, and it was only natural for their fellow graduates accepting those calls to take their word that it was for the best, and make sure that their own ministries did whatever they could to help.

The old administrators didn't have the urge, the fervour, the pounding sense of hurry that the eager young men from ENA did. Government ministries gradually began to realise that having an ENA graduate of their own would mean that they could share in the power, the efficiency, of this wonderful new network that represented the best of youthful France. So gradually — and in a flood after Mendès-France selected a frightfully young graduate of ENA's first class as head of his personal staff — ENA graduates began to fill up the Ministers' offices themselves.

By early 1960s accounts of the power ENA alumni had within government were reaching business circles. Japanese firms, choosing Paris as headquarters for their planned export trade to the new Common Market, were among the first to see the chance. They gingerly began to offer ENA graudates large salaries if they would retire from government service, or just take a leave of absence, to join their newly implanted firms.

Almost all the ENA graduates refused. They had taken their degree to help the state, they wanted to help the state, and in France's centralised government they were in a very good position to do just that. But a few *did* decide to take the money, and leave the government behind. Would their old classmates do them the same favours now, when the calls were about easing import duties for certain Japanese products, or securing land rights for a foreign multinational's plant in the suburbs?

They did. The foreign firms got what they wanted, and that led more and more French companies to start their own hunt for these magical people who could get things done. There were only a few hundred ENA alumni over 30 by then, so as the firms bid against each other to lure them out of government, the salaries they began to offer were stupendous.

A few left for these vastly lucrative short stays in industry, then a lot left, and soon a new verb entered the French language: *pantouflage*, from the root *pantoufles* for slippers, and meaning, in just three eloquent syllables, 'to slip from one job to another, especially industry to government or vice-versa, as readily as slipping on and off a new pair of slippers'.

How to get in?

For the traditional upper middle classes of Paris, now coming back into their own after the upsets of the 1940s, this vast outpouring of funds to ENA title-holders was too much to miss. But how to get the little perishers past the ENA examinees? The problem was that the entrance exams were not easy to fiddle.

OUT OF THAT conundrum came the 'Science Po' road into ENA. It reached full flowering by the mid 1960s, and worked like this.

Good bourgeois families would get their children into one of the better Paris lycées, and upon graduation give them a year or two of private tutoring in preparation for the entrance exam for 'Science Po' — the semi-autonomous Political Science faculty of the University of Paris.

Science Po had a three-year course, and while some of the students there actually intended to study political science with a research career in mind, parental influence ensured that the school

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developed a special soft degree option that — wonder of wonders — was very neatly geared to cover the main topics of the ENA entrance exam.

Joining them in vast halls those momentous days — the written portion alone was 19 hours, and had to be spread over almost a week — would be other young adults, from the provinces and from poorer schools. These latter hoped against hope that the expensively dressed Science Po types, with their tutors, contacts, and three-year cramming degree, would still not be able to triumph against them — the provincial ones who didn't have the cramming, but merely the strength of a first-rate mind.

There was little chance of that. By the late 1960s, 80 per cent of ENA entrants came, by the school's own reckoning, from a 'very favoured milieu'; Parisians who had diligently followed the great Science Po trudge. It was the return of the very people ENA had been originally created to remove, the children of the very same upper middle class or ancient families who had discredited France (the wealthy 16th arrondissement was one of the only quarters where the cobblestones did not have to be replaced after the liberation of Paris in 1944; they had never been torn up to make barricades) during the war.

The takeover of ENA by the upper bourgeoisie in the 1960s ensured that de Gaulle — then President — would have solid great family backing for his new Fifth Republic, whose constitution had been written by the ENA's founder, Michel Debré.

De Gaulle had practical support for this belief that such an ENA revision would be for the best. His staunchest cabinet support at the time came from the scion of a certain wealthy, once-Petainist family, a youngster who had somehow managed to get into ENA in the early years and was now the General's ever-accommodating finance minister: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

These changes were hard to detect by the general public. The first critiques came from within, most notably in a book from two ENA students in 1967, where the term 'enarque' — to mean an ENA graduate — was first coined, and where ENA was decried as 'a rotting sore' on the body of society, the 'alibi through which the dominant classes mask their real power'.

It was just the sort of thing that added to ENA's mystique, and upped the value of its degree even more. Parents of prospective ENA students read the book with longing — 'yes!' it reassured them, 'they were the dominant class . . . their children could have real power!' That is the model, the goal to mimic and aim for, which the students so recently on the streets were brought up with.

BY THE LATE 1970s, ENA had become a mockery of its earliest hopes. The school had moved to new headquarters in a magnificent Ancien Régime structure, with interior gardens, soft lighting, a library loaded with current TV video cassettes from around the world for student pleasure, and government support, covering student stipends and teaching costs, that reached £40,000 per student per year.

There was no nonsense about a mere first, upper and lower second, or third-class degree from ENA. Each student, in perfect Cartesian clarity, was given a distinct numerical ranking. Number one could enter the Inspectorate des Finances, still in its magnificent Louvre offices, could possibly be controlling entire African economies (Paris acts as central banker for numerous ex-colonies) by his late 20s, and then could expect to make his *pantouflage*, at a staggering salary, to a private firm. The student ranked last, by contrast, might be forced into the desolation that was Health or National Police administration. From there he waited for the *pantouflage* offer that would only be of the second degree at best.

The result has been a steady spread of the ENA network among the now 3,800-plus old boys. Giscard had many 'enarques' as his cabinet officers, as did Mitterrand (including his Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius), and now Chirac, himself an enarque.

Chirac's enarque ministers have loaded their personal cabinets with enarques, but perhaps even more importantly, so have the ministers who were not enarques, but realised that without these magic connections they would have little chance of getting anything done. Even the communist ministers back under Mitterrand had done so. Enarques are very comfortable people to have working under you. They don't question, they're always on time, and they do not let personal problems intrude on their work. Could they have made it to and through ENA if they had?

Mitterrand made some efforts at reforming ENA — for a while there were a few reserved places for trade unionists — but with the exception of some of the very first ENA graduates, the old boys, including many in Mitterrand's own team, detested such a change. In 1981 only four per cent of ENA students were of working-class background, and that was the way it should stay. Chirac, when he came to power this year, quickly got rid of the unionists.

Even under Mitterrand, though, there had never been any move to instigate the one reform that would have cut down ENA's power: to disallow the switch from public life to private. This was not even considered; it would have undercut too much of contemporary French life. The students on the streets want to be as near the top as they can: and their protests were very largely aimed at stopping a reform which would have downgraded many of them. Without ENA being there as a goad and reminder, their action would not, one suspects, have been the same.

Chirac has done what is necessary to keep the demonstrating ordinary students quiet. They are not important in the life of the country. It is only the parallel world of ENA and the other grandes écoles that is truly important . . . and it is that world which will keep on going whatever happens.

The stranglehold ENA has on French life, with its networks, phone calls, and guaranteed appointments, is something to make even Britain's own Christ Church and Athenaeum permanent secretaries envious.

An ENA kept as it was shortly after the war would be an excellent tool for improving a country. But such a tool does not easily hold still — even if the individuals in it will never, ever, be found marching through the streets. □

David Bodanis is a writer who works in France and Britain.

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Neil draws the sting

MICHAEL LEAPMAN *reports on the Labour Party leader's visit to America and the interest it's aroused in the media on both sides of the Atlantic*

OUTSIDE THE customs area at Atlanta airport, I was approached by a young reporter.

'Excuse me, sir,' he inquired politely. 'But are you Mr Neil Kinnock?'

He pronounced the name slowly, as if he scarcely believed it, placing the accent on the final syllable. I offered him a quick verbal photofit of the subject and did not await the outcome.

There is no reason why the Leader of the Opposition's face should be familiar in the southern US, any more than a reporter from, say, the *Western Mail* would easily spot Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia. Nor was it the purpose of Kinnock's visit to America last week to get the natives to pronounce his name correctly. The original point was to clarify his attitude towards the US to British voters, in the run-up to the election. The emphasis switched to explaining Labour's non-nuclear defence policy when controversy on that issue arose after the trip was planned.

Kinnock does not share the anti-Americanism of the Labour left. He chose to accept invitations to speak in the south on civil rights and South Africa, and at Harvard on international co-operation, to symbolise that there are streams of opinion in the United States with which he and the party identify strongly. Even if he cannot hope (or wish) to enjoy the warmest relations with the current Republican administration, he has friends in the civil rights movement and among East coast liberals.

If his primary aim had been to make an impact on America, he would have found an excuse for postponing the trip when the Iran arms scandal grew into a major Washington preoccupation. As it was, he could get his views on NATO defence across on the TV networks only by slipping them in at the end after offering himself primarily as an expert commentator on the Iran issue.

'There's always that suspicion about politicians right round the world that there's somebody with his finger in the till,' he cheerfully told Jane Pauley on NBC's *Today*, when she asked him for the British reaction to the President's embarrassment. By the end of the week he had taken some coaching in colloquial American: the hand in the till became the hand in the cookie jar, but it was still not clear just whose hand it was supposed to be.

THE HARVARD speech was the centrepiece of the trip — a closely argued exposition of Labour's defence policy, destined to become the standard text to which future enquirers will be referred. An audience of several hundred, many of them standing, crammed into the three tiers of the tall central atrium of the John F. Kennedy School of Government to hear him. It was, by Kinnock's standards, an earnest speech. The first joke, a jibe at Mrs Thatcher, did not come for half an hour, on page 18 of the 33-page text.

He is keen to drive home the point that Labour's policy is not primarily an emotional reaction to the horrors of nuclear war, but the product of serious thinking about how Britain can best contribute to NATO given what we can afford to spend on defence — a higher proportion of our gross national product, as he always points out, than any other member of the alliance. But Americans from both major parties retain their doubts, based partly on the method by which the policy was arrived at.

Americans distinguish between the twin prongs of the policy. While some acknowledge that the independent British deterrent has little strategic value and could be forfeited without too much grief, they regard the American nuclear bases in a different light, as playing an integral role in NATO strategy. Kinnock does not believe that the US will pull all its troops out of Britain if the nuclear bases are closed, despite the threat made while he was in America by General Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

He first learned of the Rogers statement at the National Press Club in Washington, where he received his best reception of the tour from an unusually large gathering of correspondents. He responded to the general by pointing out that American troops in Europe are there ultimately to defend the United States, and in withdrawing them an American administration would be cutting off its nose to spite its face. Kinnock is probably correct in judging that, in the event, no such withdrawal would take place: but that will not prevent the Americans from making the threat in the hope of provoking a policy change.

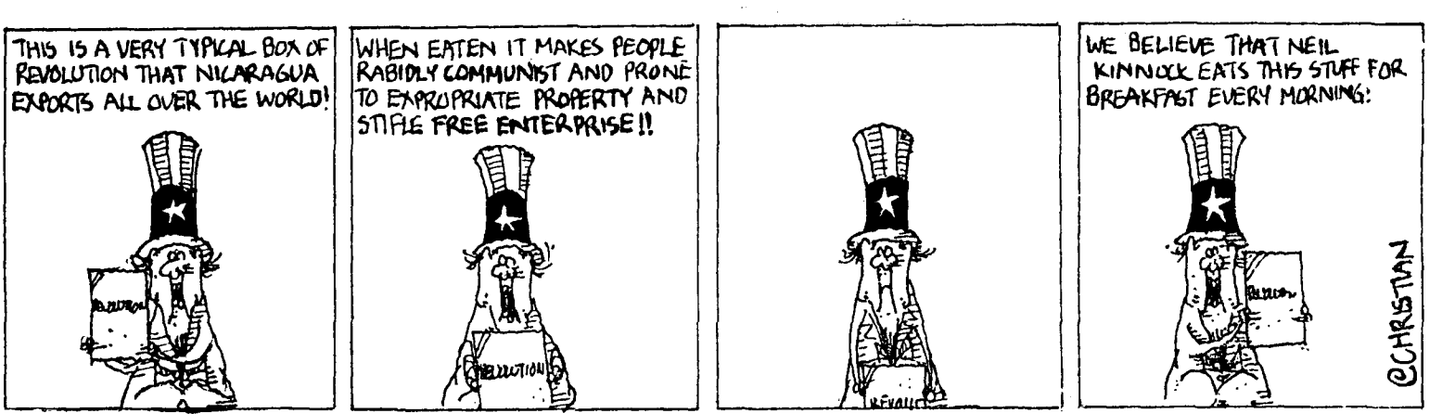
A surprisingly large number of London-based reporters accompanied him on his journey through the December rainstorms, reflecting the interest aroused by the sustained campaign against Labour defence policy that the Conservatives have been waging since the Blackpool conference in October. The opinion polls seem to support the view that this could be an election-loser for Labour, but Kinnock believes that the Conservatives have raised the issue too early for their own good, giving him time to get his case over to the electorate and defuse the issue.

It would have been worse for Labour had the topic lain dormant until a few weeks before the election, allowing no time to make a coherent argument and, as in 1983, giving all the appearance of panic. As it is, by seeking the understanding of American politicians rather than their full backing for the policy, Kinnock was trying to persuade voters in Britain that the case for non-nuclear defence is at least intellectually respectable. The trip thus fell into place as a curtain-raiser for the formal domestic launching of the defence policy this week.

MOST OF HIS accompanying press corps were looking for him to make a fool of himself — hence the gleeful reports when he attracted only a handful of listeners at his first speech at Atlanta. The travelling chorus of disapproval were miffed from the very beginning when Kinnock would not find the time to snatch a quick drink with them in the first-class bar on the nine-hour flight from Gatwick to Atlanta. (The *Sun* man was the only one who actually had a first-class ticket. Poignantly, his colleague from *The Times* was in economy class at the back, while most of the others were in the intermediate business class.)

Kinnock reasoned that, whether he drank with them or not, the scribes were not going to write about him in a friendly manner — and that in the circumstances he had better things to do with his time. As the trip progressed a vicious circle was established: the coverage became more and more hostile and he grew less and less accessible. All the same, he believes that in the long term the visit will have helped establish the credibility of his defence posture. He is confident that he can win the general election with a non-nuclear policy and without the goodwill of the press. The first of these two handicaps is likely to prove more burdensome than the second: there is scant choice that either will be modified before polling day. □

Michael Leapman's book about Neil Kinnock's leadership of the Labour Party is due to be published in the spring by Unwin Hyman.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ECONOMICS

The economics of children at work

Christine Whitehead

HE MOVED disconsolately from table to table and with a filthy rag wiped the greasy remnants of the customers' meals into a bowl. With no knives and forks and banana leaves as plates, eating can be a messy business. The boy looked about eight, with deep-set tired eyes and an air of unforgettable misery about him.

Official statistics in India maintain that around 17 million children are forced to work for a living. Unofficially it is thought that this figure could be as high as 100 million. Child labour in India is regarded as an unavoidable evil.

Fifty per cent of India's total population of 758 million live below the poverty line. India *can* now feed itself: but as farms become more mechanised and larger, peasants are being forced off the land to seek a living elsewhere. Migration to the cities is an epidemic. As shanties and hovels grow up around the edge of the cities, so more and more of their children are forced out to help their parents feed their families. 80 per cent of all migrant children work, whereas only 19 per cent of the resident children do so.

That many children have to work in India is a fact of life, and nothing is likely to change overnight. If a farmer has four sons, and needs their help on the land, little is going to persuade him that it's a good idea to send them to school. Although literacy levels are steadily increasing, education is still not compulsory, and for an impoverished farmer it is often an expensive luxury he cannot afford. Although primary school enrolment rates are as high as 68 per cent, the drop-out rate is enormous. One quarter of all rural children will never see the inside of a classroom. Children are regarded not only as an insurance policy for their parents' old age, but as an extra pair of hands with earning power.

Although 80 per cent of all working children are employed in agriculture, often alongside their parents, it is the other 20 per cent that are the major concern. Mostly they are employed in very low status jobs which adults are reluctant to take on: cleaning up in snack bars and canteens; working in motor repair shops, on construction sites; in all manner of cottage industries — rolling cigarettes, embroidery, weaving. They work in brick factories and on the roads — anything they can turn their hands to. Often they work long and exhausting hours, for tiny sums of money: two to three rupees (20 to 25p) for eight hours' work is thought an adequate reward for a child.

If there *is* any money in a family for education, the boys will be the ones sent to school. Girls may often stay at home until they are about eight, looking after siblings, fetching water, helping in the house. From about nine onwards, they are looked on an an economic resource. If they have had the chance for a few years schooling, they may well drop out at this age. Thereafter they are often stunted in terms of development and training — condemned to the lowest and most tedious of jobs for the rest of their lives.

SHOBA IS 13. She is the eldest of five children. As the eldest child, her mother has always been dependent on her for help. Her father was a drunk, and locally known as a 'vagabond type'. He abandoned the family two years ago. Shoba lives with her family in a thatched hut in a village in the state of Karnatak, some 500 miles south of Bombay. She has never had the chance of going to school.

In the early years her mother needed her to look after her younger brothers and sisters, while she tried to earn a few rupees working in the fields. For several years now, Shoba has been the major bread winner in the family. She works as the 'teawallah', making endless cups of tea in a local factory. She earns 3 rupees a day. In the morning she helps her brothers and sisters get ready for school, a privilege she has been denied. All day long she makes cups of tea, fetching the water from the well, finding firewood, washing cups. After work she helps her mother prepare a meal. At eight o'clock if she's not too tired, she'll attend the local adult education class in an attempt to learn to read. At night she sleeps on a thin rag spread on the mud floor of their hut, alongside her brothers and sisters.

With very little education, and no training, Shoba's life is unlikely to change much. She is destined to work at menial tasks like making tea for the rest of her life. And yet compared to many, she's one of the lucky ones. The work is not too arduous, she's well treated and the pay is fair. Her family are totally dependent on her 25p a day's wages.

The largest single concentration of child labour in India, indeed in the world, is in the match industry in Sivakasi. Sivakasi is a town in the state of Tamil Nadu in the south of India where 45,000 children between the ages of 3½-15 are employed making matches and fireworks.

> ***'In the firework factories accidents are not uncommon. There have been several reports of explosions and children being roasted alive. Very little compensation is ever paid'***

Sivakasi was first put on the map a few years ago, as a result of investigations into a bus accident. A bus, packed with children, was caught up in a flooded river: 37 children drowned. An investigation into the accident revealed that all the children had been on their way to work in the neighbouring match and firework factories. Children as young as 3½ were leaving home at four and five in the morning, being transported from village to village as the bus collected children on the way to the factories, often not returning home until late in the evening. As many as 120 were jammed onto the bus, and the average bus visited 30 villages on the way.

Each village had an agent who ensured that the children were up and ready when the bus arrived. They worked 12 hours a day earning between 2 and 3 rupees a day. Sometimes they were away from home for 15 hours. It is, and was deemed illegal, hazardous employment, but whenever inspectors turned up on the scene, the children were hustled out of the back door. No proper records are kept of the children's employment for the inspectors to check on.

In the firework factories accidents are not uncommon. There have been several reports of explosions and of many children being roasted alive. Very little compensation is ever paid to the parents. The industry is dominated and owned by the Nadar caste, which sees to it that this impoverished drought-stricken area remains so, impeding the spread of irrigation to the area, so that the children around the area have no opportunity of working on the land and are forced into the factories.

IT IS JUST these sorts of industries which are the targets of the government's new legisation, brought before parliament a few weeks ago. By legitimising child employment, it attempts to implement both maximum working hours and minimum wages, and to give the child some protection and recognition by unions. By forcing wages up and making children's employment less attractive, it is hoped that employers will take on adults instead. If children *were* gradually replaced, India's chronic unemployment, as high as 65 per cent in some districts, may be alleviated.

But critics of the bill claim that legalising child employment in any way is a step backwards and will further encourage child labour. 'A wolf in sheep's clothing', say the critics, and an affront to the children of India. Experience has shown that laws can easily be passed but never implemented. Administrative back-up and funding never materialise. Employers are rarely fined, let alone sent to jail. Bombay had 18 inspectors to visit the 6,562 sweatshops around the city: most were never visited and backhanders were paid to keep the inspectors out. Often there was genuine concern that for a child to lose his job would bring suffering to his family.

Experience has shown, particularly in the state of Kerala, that the higher the literacy rate — and Kerala has the highest in India (76 per cent literacy, compared to a national average of 36 per cent) — the lower the incidence of child labour. Education must be the way forward, but to insist that all children go to school is presently utopian, and would bring great hardship and suffering to many families. It is an unfortunate fact that parents are often the harshest taskmasters, committing their children to gruelling hours. Families are often the last to protest about exploitation.

A conclusion of a recent UK seminar said this: 'The elimination of the exploitation of child labour will require economic reform aimed at a more equitable distribution of the world's resources.' Working children are with us as long as grinding poverty is. □

Christine Whitehead is a Thames TV researcher, who investigated child labour in India for a documentary, 'To Us a Child', shown on Tuesday to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the United Nations children's aid organisation UNICEF.

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MEDIA

The *Guardian* and Postmodernism

Paul Kerr

WHAT WAS the *Guardian* up to last week devoting eight articles to Postmodernism? Is Fleet Street finally taking cultural politics seriously? Or is this simply the new face of designer liberalism? Perhaps a clue was hidden away in Martin Pawley's piece on architecture: 'Postmodernism in architecture is no less important than the SDP in politics'. That's all right then.

Richard Gott's useful introduction to the series defined Postmodernism (henceforth PM) as 'an eclectic movement of parody and pastiche that fits happily into a world where conservation has become the rage, where new pubs can be built with Victorian fittings, where modernist tower blocks are replaced with "vernacular" retreats into the archaic, where a Prime Minister can retire into the neo-Georgian.' And he went on to suggest that 'It is not difficult to comprehend [PM] — in art and architecture, music and film, drama and fiction — as a reflection of (or a comparable phenomenon to) the present wave of political reaction sweeping the western world.'

The verdict of the seven *Guardian* critics drafted in to do battle with PM seems to have been that such comprehension is actually very difficult indeed. They couldn't even agree what PM is in the first place. And such a consensus is indeed hard to come by. We need to be clear, for instance, whether we're talking about a stylistic phenomenon or a socio-economic phase and to be aware that different media can be out-of-synch with each other in relation to either or both. And, since PM is so often described by its adherents as 'the end of grand narrative' the collapse of overarching systems and theories, it is easy to forget to what extent PM itself is all-embracing.

Neither Tom Sutcliffe, on music, nor Derek Malcolm, on movies, mentioned PM at all in their columns. Not surprisingly, Martin Pawley, Waldemar Januszczak and W.L. Webb, writing respectively about architecture, painting and literature, were on surer ground, since their arts have been at the crux of the PM debate. Hugh Hebert, however, writing about television, simply lamented the absence of good taste and the presence of commercials in the medium.

Gott's introduction referred to such intellectual protagonists in the debate as Jurgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard. In France, Lyotard and Baudrillard have taken that debate into the pages of the daily papers and weekly magazines; in Germany, Habermas is a regular contributor to the press; in Italy Umberto Eco writes for a range of papers — indeed, his recent book, *Faith in Fakes* is a collection of just such articles. In Britain, though, it's been left to magazines like *The Face* to popularise the term.

So the *Guardian* is to be congratulated for devoting so much space to this area of intellectual debate. In the past its Agenda pages have been crucial in bringing the ideas of people like Anthony Barnett, E.P. Thompson, Stuart Hall and Eric Hobsbawn to a wider readership. But when it comes to culture, Britain's customary anti-intellectualism rears its ugly head. Michael Billington noted in his piece that 'the theatre is less prey to intellectual fashion than the other arts' and, as theatre is undoubtedly the art we're proudest of, perhaps this complacency mirrors Britain's more general xenophobic philistinism in the realm of ideas.

So how *did* the *Guardian* define PM? Certainly parody and pastiche were often cited; heritage culture and ransacking art history were referred to; neo-classicism, Victorian Values and imitating the past were all mentioned. But these traits were seen as exclusively negative: the dominant tone was a dismissive cultural pessimism about the arts these critics are paid to review. Only Webb and Gott himself seem to share American literary critic Frederic Jameson's at least ambivalent attitude to the phenomenon, his stress that it is a 'kind of aesthetic populism' which evinces an effacement of the old cultural class system (buttressed by modernism) between high and popular cultures. Even Webb himself, in his otherwise intelligent piece, derided PM as 'easy reading, looking and listening' — none of them particularly pernicious characteristics, I'd have thought, and none of them exclusive to or equivalent with PM. Hebert's article, however, is the most blatantly elitist: 'Postmodernism', he writes, 'is processed art. Kraft cheese culture. And everyone has the means to do the home processing: the television set.' And again, with ill-concealed contempt, 'the audience for postmodern art is made to become involved in the cultural process itself.' Shock horror — the audience involved!

> ***When it comes to culture, Britain's customary anti-intellectualism rears its ugly head***

OF COURSE the very concept of Postmodernism begs the question whether there is or indeed ever was a modernism in the medium under discussion. Michael Billington, for instance, sees the theatre as having 'arrived at Postmodernism without fully absorbing modernism' — no mean feat when you think about it. Derek Malcolm says cinematic modernism is dead but never bothers to specify what is was when it was alive. So I'll have a go. If you take the Hollywood cinema as a kind of classical 'norm', then modernism is perhaps to be found in the European art cinema. Briefly, art cinema transferred critical/spectatorial attention from the tale to the teller. Where in Hollywood films a flashback is at least nominally the subjective experience of a character, in art cinema a flashforward (like that in the film *Switchboard Operator* mentioned by Malcolm) can only come from the filmmaker.

If there is a postmodernism in the cinema it is thus one in which the 'knowing' filmmaker pastiches or parodies classic cinema in an art cinema mode. Thus Malcolm is once again off the mark when he says that today's successful filmmaker pretends that Griffith, Ford, Hawks and Welles never existed. In fact, European art cinema has been 'remaking' Hollywood since the French New Wave while in Hollywood itself the so-called cinephile Movie Brat directors fill their films with references to the old masters. If the bible of PM architecture is Robert Venturi's volume, *Learning from Las Vegas*, the precept of PM in the cinema is learning from Los Angeles. Such filmmaking exemplifies what Umberto Eco calls 'double coding' whereby both 'innocent' and 'knowing' viewers can read the same film in different ways.

All seven critics, however, seem to agree about television. Michael Billington defined PM theatre as essentially a way of combatting television: 'Either by becoming bigger and gaudier than the box can ever be, or by engaging with the audience in conditions of conspiratorial closeness.' Derek Malcolm attacked television too: 'There is no way that television,' he wrote, 'could effectively utilise the services of those who have pushed past the previous boundaries of the cinema — imagine what would happen to a young Orson Welles or Godard or Mizoguchi if they had to develop their ideas on the box . . . Television can't or won't accommodate this sort of outrageous talent.'

There are several things to say about this. First, it replicates precisely the crude notion of aesthetic evolution so effectively demolished by Januszczak in his article. Second, while neither Welles nor Mizoguchi worked in television — though Welles did work brilliantly for American radio — Godard has to date made two 12-part series for French television; as the director himself put it more than ten years ago: 'My ideas only get through on television'. And finally, is Malcolm implying that Welles was 'accommodated' by American cinema? Meanwhile, other 'outrageous talents' to have worked regularly for television include Fassbinder, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, Wenders, Herzog, Ruiz, Straub-Huillet, Greenaway . . .

Which brings us finally to Hugh Hebert's diatribe against television. Hebert insists: 'If there is a crisis in modern culture, television is it.' For Hebert, 'There is no canon to relate to' in television because its 'past starts now'. It is true that in Britain television's archive riches remain inaccessible, but that is all the more reason why the critic should keep the past and its achievements in the reader/viewer's eye. For Hebert, this lack of a past is leading television to rush into the future leaving literacy behind it: 'The more you speed up the image, the less possible it is to use words.' *The Singing Detective* is, I'd suggest, the best written and best 'imaged' piece of film drama to hit any sized screen here for some considerable time. It is also without doubt the fastest moving and most complex work. *The Singing Detective* is a perfect example of Eco's double coding — it is genre television about genre; it is a compulsive narrative about the narrative compulsion. It is also more popular than the three ITV 'quality' drama serials recently screened — all of which were far less ambitious. What does that say about Hebert's cultural pessimism? While culture goes back to the future, criticism of this kind can only go forward into the past. □

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ARTS REVIEW OF THE YEAR

ZOOMING THROUGH A YEAR OF CREATIVITY

SUNDAY AT 10·25PM

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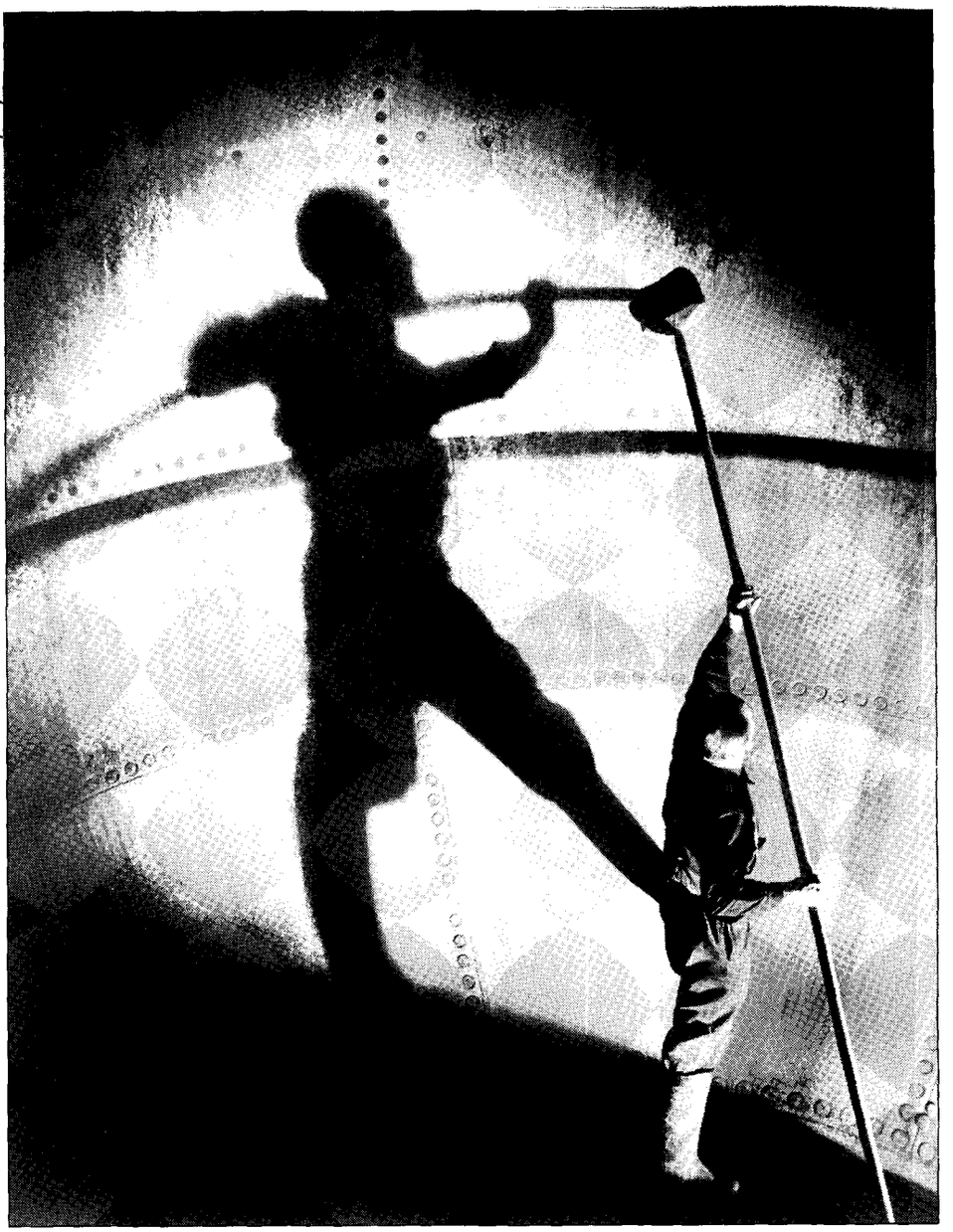
ARTS

PHOTOGRAPHY

Look on my works

Liz Heron

Industrial Image
Photographers' Gallery, London, to 31 January, then on tour



Walter Nurnberg's 1947 'Cleaning the Inside of a Brewing Copper'

'SMOKE OF THOUSAND chimneys belches up into dreary umbrella, but there are no more friendly smiles than those of the people who live under it' runs the caption that splices an image of Sheffield's smoky industrial landscape with the happy faces of a workforce more than willing to pay the environmental price. The date was May 1947, when this was Britain's steel boom town and a photo-feature in *Illustrated* magazine announced it to the nation. Next to this archival fragment at the **Industrial Image** exhibition hang photographs from a documentary essay on the declining traditional industries of the West Midlands, circa 1979.

Manufacturing and industrial production no longer shape the physiognomy of cities, nor visibly alter and pollute their atmosphere. Since the late Sixties it is commerce whose glass and steel temples cut through the London skyline. Office blocks and shopping precincts — and, now, as if to outrun obsolescence, proliferating museums — claim architectural precedence. Disused monuments to heavy industry remain, perhaps recycled for other use, often seeming to evoke an age even older than their own: Battersea Power Station looms over the Thames like some gothic relic. It takes the steeply angled diagonals of Noel Griggs' 1933 photograph to remind us of the modern urban dynamism such structures represented.

Large thematic exhibitions such as this can be a marvellous spur to revised perceptions, for they lift photographs out of their original contexts to create a new chain of visual relationships. These displacements are necessarily all the more fluid since photography crosses the categories of art and technology, record and representation, the symbolic and the particular.

The first section unfolds as an epic panorama of industrialisation from 1843 to 1918. As Britain's 20th-century infrastructure was being laid by the great Victorian engineers, photography's potential as an instrument of precise record was grasped and its power to dramatise and memorialise achievements simultaneously recognised. Early uses reveal a preoccupation with the progress of unprecedented industrial transformations.

Photographs of excavation work for the first London underground served to illustrate the problems of new techniques. Joseph Cundall documented, stage by stage, the construction of Brunel's steamship *The Great Eastern*, while the photographs of its launch and maiden voyage by Howlett and Downes fed a growing public appetite for postcards and stereoscopic views. Likewise, the Forth Bridge, every phase of its construction meticulously recorded by engineer-photographer Evelyn Carey, became a popular subject at lantern-slide shows.

The function of the postcard as a unique source of visual information is brought home here by the series commemorating the Senghenydd pit disaster which killed 439 miners. Mining can be identified at a convergence of different photographic discourses: the voyeuristic sensationalising of its dangers; the objective documentation of engineering problems or of innovative methods; working conditions exposed in the interest of humanitarianism or trade union struggle — as in the survey the Reverend William Wickham made of his Wigan parish in the 1890s, and a decade later, in the slides W. E. Jones produced for his father's talks on behalf of the South Wales Mining Federation.

In 'The British Worker', an Arts Council exhibition mounted in 1981, the richness of historical perspectives was conveyed through an emphasis on the simultaneous diversity of impulse and purpose behind the act of photographing. By including several of the same photographers and subjects, *Industrial Image* invites comparison. Here, however, the wider context is missing and, although the work of industrial photographers hangs alongside that of photojournalists and wartime propagandists, the strictly linear arrangement merely suggests chronological and evolutionary *shifts* of perspective.

These are certainly fascinating in themselves and all the more striking in the modern section — despite its blandly schematic presentation and the catalogue's tendency, in places, to imitate the PR tone of what in many cases was the photographs' original context. With the modern age, industry's public face no longer reflected the glory of its top-hatted captains, nor did it so grandly celebrate the driven triumph of machine over nature. Instead, as pictorialism gave way to a sharp, modernist aesthetic significantly influenced by the German New Objectivity movement, it was the city itself, the excitement of its rhythms and structures and the place of human beings within this whole that prevailed. Notable here are the photographs of Noel Griggs and the dramatic expressionism of Walter Nurnberg.

But across this century and a half it is only in the

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last decade that human presences dwindle to the point of minimalist extinction. In two contrasting images, robots replace workers on the Morris assembly line; antiseptic micro-electronic laboratories denote an economy of human personnel; processes no longer need people. While human labour becomes invisible or superfluous, industry also has more hidden effects on the environment — in 1986 a man fishes in the sea beside one of Sellafield's waste pipelines.

Photography itself, long a part of the processes of industrial manufacture and regulation, is now a supreme instrument of surveillance and control, at its most all-seeing in the Space pictures beamed to earth via the Remote Sensing Centre. Yet, as images of consumption multiply and implode on our consciousness of the everyday world, the immediate realities of production, however urgent for life or safety, increasingly elude the camera.

★ ★ ★

In response to the seasonal excess of illumination, Camerawork asked 18 artists to create their own light-and-projection shows for Bethnal Green passers-by this Christmas. You can see **The Illuminations**, a different display every evening, from 4-8pm until 20 December (except Sunday) at Camerawork, 121 Roman Road, London E2; tel 01-980 6256 for details. □

CINEMA

Viewfinder

Judith Williamson

DURING THE recent London Film Festival I took part in a symposium on the Function of Film Criticism. Since the people most affected by my views on that subject are the readers of this column, it seems a good place to outline some of them.

The LFF debate was not as productive as it might have been because a dichotomy was set up from the start between 'Artist' and 'Critic'. This polarised concept is never a very useful one but in the case of cinema it is particularly unhelpful because planning, raising the money for and making a film is a very different process from, for example, writing a poem. The idea of an audience is built in from the outset, otherwise most films would not be funded: which means that films, perhaps more than any other medium, not only carry the particular obsessions of a single 'artist' but usually indicate some of the preoccupations of the society they're made in, the audience they're made for.

This is also true of film criticism itself. The criticism found in almost all the daily and weekly national press sees its role as *assessing* the latest releases: fitting seamlessly into the familiar structures of consumer choice by letting us know whether films are good, quite good, not very good, bad, and so on — in other words, whether they're worth spending our money on. But what this liberal humanist criticism never asks is, good for what? Bad for whom? This form of criticism assumes a consensus which fails to distinguish different interests of different groups and the different functions of different films.

Perhaps the most pointless of all criticism is found in the *Time Out/City Limits* sloganising — 'unmissable', 'avoid', ' a must-see film' (what precisely *is* a must-see film?) — pointless because the variety of reasons for which people go to see a film is completely ignored. Where the 'miss/don't miss' formula coincides with a simplistic 'Right On' politics, it also obscures the ideological complexities of a film like, say, *Top Gun* — the most popular film of the year in the USA, yet dismissed in one line by *City Limits*.

At the other end of the spectrum from the Hit or Miss ('I'll give it five') brigade there is the enormous body of film theory, developed through the Seventies in journals like *Screen* and *Framework*, which has drawn on semiotics and psychoanalysis in an attempt to analyse films as 'texts', to understand the position of the viewer ('reader') of the text, and focusing on the ways that meaning is produced in the relation between the two, rather than simply being 'put in the film' by the director. These theories offer a completely different approach to cinema; given the similarities in the form of films and dreams, psychoanalytic theory in particular is very helpful in offering a perspective on mainstream movies like *ET* or *Rambo* and their widespread appeal.

However, the biggest problem about most academic film theory is that it is often very hard to understand, partly because of the terminology used but also because most of its debates have remained sealed off in the academic world and there seems to have been little will to communicate theoretical ideas to a wider audience. It is true that the notoriously incomprehensible *Screen* has been turned into a more accessible journal under the current editorship. Yet there is still an enormous gulf between film theory and most film criticism.

I believe that this gulf is neither necessary nor inevitable. Film theory offers not so much comments on particular films, but *ways of looking* at films which can be used more than once, as it were, going against the grain of the consumer ethic. I would like to use this space to suggest ways of *thinking* about different kinds of film (as with the role of women in horror films, which arose recently with *Smooth Talk*). Unlike many academic theorists I strongly believe that all really useful ideas can and should be expressed clearly. On the other hand there is a strongly anti-intellectual streak in our mainstream press; but the fear of ideas is only the other side of the coin from obscuring them.

One aspect of putting ideas forward is that you can no longer be the invisible arbiter but have to declare your position. It should be clear to anyone who has read this column over the last few months that I am writing with a feminist and a communist politics: though as a film school graduate and having worked as a film maker before coming to this job I see see no reason why a political criticism should preclude an *enjoyment* of cinema. But just as film theories can provide ways into the structure of films, so can a political view of cinema provide ways of questioning assumptions about the structure of society, of challenging what we take for granted.

I have already tried to move away from the old system of reviewing all the week's new releases. While I do intend mainly to focus on current films, I will also, in future, discuss other films, not necessarily new — or *kinds* of films (as with the recent column on animation).

In trying to provide a background to the film workshop movement, in last week's column, I also became aware of the dearth of information in the press about the really thriving film culture in Britain — the infrastructure created by the workshops. Here is another gulf, between a whole area of activity and its near-invisibility in the mainstream press; one which I will also try to bridge in this space. □

DANCE

Past masters

Stephanie Jordan

London Contemporary Dance Theatre
Sadler's Wells
Royal Ballet
Covent Garden

LONDON CONTEMPORARY Dance Theatre is working to repair its loss of emphasis on individual values and creativity: thus goes the programme pronouncement from Robin Howard, founder of the company 20 years ago and Director General of its Trust. He is brave to recognise the problem and advocate the 'Route of Risk', but misguided in believing that the current season is any foretaste of a healthier future.

For a start, much of the repertoire is from years back, or looks as if it is, the double irony being that the only valuable home choreographers represented are company history: Alston, long gone (he only returns for revivals), and Resident Choreographer Siobhan Davies, set to depart, at least temporarily, to take up a Fulbright Arts Fellowship in the USA.

Robert Cohan remains to direct company policy and fulfil the routine assignment of one or two new works each season. But, years ago now, he reached an impasse, trying to make some sort of artistic sense out of gratuitous theatrical effects and the weary clichés of whole-body gesticulation. Meanwhile, he has given up on the potential of space, shape, rhythm or texture to enhance a dance statement. *Interrogations*, I hope, marks the end of his quest into such barren territory: 'Star Trek Martha Graham' was my companion's verdict.

Certainly, there are the archetypal characters that we associate with Graham and the set is metallic and pseudo-sf. We have a Traveller, whose internal torments seem to be the premise of the piece, a Guardian, a Woman, a Dream, etc. Yet, a programme note informs us, the original stimulus was Hamlet's soliloquy beginning, yes, 'To be or not to be . . .' — though Cohan admits that it is not 'a dance translation of the story line'. Ah well, dance critics are accustomed to such synoptic non sequiturs. It is, in fact, an orgy of incoherence and, with its strobe-lit ending and hero struggling beneath impossible odds (here a huge swathe of white cloth), a mere revisit to Cohan's early and finer *Cell*.

Cohan's *Ceremony* is also new and looks just as

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Viva Zap art!

Naseem Khan

THIS MUST surely be the smallest pantomine in the world. I'm in Brighton's Zap Club — a long thin vault that tunnels back from the windy seafront under the windy esplanade. At one end of the barrelled space is a titchy stage — mostly used only by music groups and solo performers. Things like wings and entrances do not exist.

But what the hell. Wings are not going to stand in the way of the 20 performers gathered together to tell the frightful story of *The Santa Claus Killings*, a tale to chill your blood this Christmastide. 'The very fabric of Christmas is at stake here,' mutters Sherlock Holmes through clenched teeth to his faithful Watson, and you can see his point. Day by day news is coming in of the death of Father Christmases (one gored, apparently, by his own reindeer). Who is responsible? Could it be the evil Moriarty, escaped from jail?

Holmes' pursuit leads him and Watson from Baker Street to Baskerville Manor (another death), the Casbah Club (home for 'pseudo-intellectuals, drop-outs, socialists and other social deviants'), a Christmas grotto in a large store and, finally, to Greenland itself. In the course of it, extremely unpanto-like characters make their apperance — Don Canneloni, Mata Hari, the Hoxton Strangler — joining the Baker Street regulars (a bitter Inspector Lestrade railing against 'quiche Lorraine liberalism').

The plethora of small parts and cameos was one of the few conditions given to the panto's author, Roy Smiles, when he was asked to provide this farrago of nonsense. For, while other venues buy in their Christmas shows, the Zap Club staff do it all themselves. The characters can all be found working in various capacities in the club — behind the bar, fixing the food, running its Art-reach (outreach) programme.

Not that this means their show consists of jolly knockabout in-house follies. Far from it. The Zap Club — which specialises in an effervescent mix of performance art, music, cabaret and video — is staffed by performers: an advantage that cuts both ways. It provides performers (stand-up comics, sessions musicians, performance artists) with a little security; and the performers, says Zap's Neil Butler, give the Club a special flavour since the work in the busy programme is being put on by people from behind the scenes who know exactly what it's all about. The annual show gives them the chance to come out from behind the bar and show their other side to the regular punters.

Ian Smith (Holmes), for instance, is a seasoned performance artist. His Watson (Helen Wells) also works as chief backing singer with Neil Butler's band. Jonathan Staines (of myriad parts) plays with Little Green Hondas. The music is by another local, Nick Dwyer, late of Pookiesnackenburger and Channel 4, and guest appearances are promised by the famous — Simon Fanshawe maybe, and Pete McCarthy of Cliffhanger.

Delightful as it sounds, the variety in people's disciplines could be a headache for a director. The enigmatically-named J. J. Waller was, however, taking it all in his stride when I went down to watch rehearsals. Since this meant having to work round the temporary absence of his Moriarty (Sarah Eddy), this says a great deal for his sang-froid. But maybe this is no more than one should expect from a man who seems to have taken his freewheeling comedy variety act almost everywhere — from the streets of Covent Garden to a wrestling ring to entertainment for the oil trade in the Middle East.

The young cast — gelled hair, black leggings, Doc Martins — were working on the exotic dance routine in the Casbah Club: a miracle of organisation on their pocket-hanky stage. The black tea-chests that make up the set were then reshuffled, and off we went to Santa's Grotto, where a suicidal Santa is grumbling about life, in a sub-Bogart voice, to a wide-eyed tot.

Waller rightly drives his cast for speed. If this general spoof is to work, it's got to be extremely crisp and fast. 'I was probably thinking more of film,' said its 26-year-old author, Roy Smiles, a history graduate from Bristol who found himself drawn into the world of cabaret through the Zap's open-platform Tuesday sessions: 'I cut my teeth on doing stand-ups.' Like most other comics, he has to cope with sporadic work on a competitive circuit — £40 a night on a good night, £15 a night more likely, and then maybe just two or three spots a week.

The Santa Claus Killings is his first performed play ('everything else has been a private thing between me and many literary agents') and is full of genuflections to Smiles' private idols — S. J. Perelman, the Marx Brothers, Thurber and the Goons — with quotes that movie fans will recognise fom *The Maltese Falcon* and Danny Kaye's *Court Jester*. Costumed all in black and white (except for odd splashes of colour like Santa's nose), the filmic effect is intended to be enhanced by B-movie clips scheduled for the interval.

Being 'amateur' without being amateur is a hard one to crack. Whether J. J. and Co. manage it will have to wait till this week's opening night for an answer. My guess, however, is that they will. Not only is *The Santa Claus* a first-rate example of a do-it-yourself Christmas show, but it's also inventive, funny and splendidly silly. I laughed and laughed, and that was only a rehearsal. □

Next Week: Work in Progress finds hilarity in Hackney.

aged. There is rather less theatre here, but only a little more choreography: bodies agonising inadequately in a Slow Dance on a Burial Ground (a typically endearing Cohan theme and the title of Stephen Montague's drone score) and, finally, a statuesque Death figure, agitating yet another vast cloth through which her victims poke their heads — Alwin Nikolais' invention of two decades ago.

Dancers are hardly sustained by such work. LCDT is short on dancers of true distinction, but good choreography makes a virtue of maturity and develops the potential of younger dancers.

It is interesting to see, for example, how meticulously performed were Alston's *Rainbow Bandit* and Davies' *The Run to Earth*, works by choreographers who attend to the niceties of a style. I respect, too, the fact that Alston and Davies lead their dancers into new territory rather than exploiting the dull complacency into which, currently, the company will all too willingly sink. LCDT's dancers are unused to the buoyancy and swiftness which Davies' new *and do they do* requires, and the premiere was a shambles. But the company learnt fast and, by the third and fourth performances, were making good sense of their material.

The title, *and do they do*, from Gertrude Stein, reflects the pure and positive action drive behind this piece. Set to Michael Nyman's rich, oscillating harmonies and motor energy, the choreography is, in impulse, multi-directional, both in its neat skitterings and generous leaps and in the joyous, hectic plunging and turning of torsos. Individuals dart in counterpoint; later, clusters of three or four, sometimes unanimous, sometimes a group disturbed as one member jets him/herself at the rest. An *adage* interlude brings the *perpetuum mobile* temporarily under control, also the broad, ecstatic gestures that suddenly blossom from a *legato* melodic line. On this occasion, however, Davies' choreography seems diminished by David Buckland's designs — multi-colour, dancing figures contained in a set of panels as backdrop; fussily laced dresses for the women; two-tone costumes for the men — all of which fragments the stage picture and distracts from the brilliance and complexity of the movement.

The **Royal Ballet**'s *Beauty and the Beast* might have become a popular new version of the children's classic to fill the gap left by the tolerably successful Cranko/Ravel ballet of 1949 for Sadler's Wells. Instead, it is a piece by Wayne Eagling, the company's latest rebel and imperfect classicist, with a Disneyland synthesised score by that petrified pomp-rocker of the Gary Glitter years, Vangelis. From memories of their previous epic collaboration, *Frankenstein*, such devices as trapdoors, moving stage floors and lighting effects were expected — and provided, most notably in a luminous hands-and-feet finale routine for the *corps*, recalling *Aladdin* at the Golders Green Hippodrome.

Choreographic expectations were nil, so not disappointed. There was also an inexcusable and laboured joke at the expense of the classical *grand pas de deux* — what must guest American Cynthia Harvey (as The Moon) have thought, in her sparkly shoes? It was preceded by four penguin-masked revellers kicking their legs up with metronomic regularity. Further cause for despair that the company should invest in such a fatuous, facetious, talentless and worthless enterprise. □

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THEATRE

Another country

Paul Allen

High Society
COLE PORTER and RICHARD EYRE *Haymarket Theatre, Leicester*
Woundings
JEFF NOON *Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester*

MUCH MORE IMPORTANT than the National Theatre is the national theatre. It is so obviously true as to be almost not worth saying: for a start it *contains* the National Theatre. But it is always worth remembering that — even if it doesn't, proportionately, reach some unspecific standards of excellence of performance as often as the showcase on the South Bank — the national theatre is wider ranging, more expressive, more capable of changing its shape and very often more fun.

The Haymarket at Leicester is part of the national theatre, a glossy and productive place whose studio is often more artistically vital than its main house. Richard Eyre, who has directed **High Society** there, and David Aukin, who has produced it, are widely expected to hold precisely these jobs at the National Theatre when Sir Peter Hall has had enough. I admire and like both men and can think of only one or two other people with both the creative capacity and the stomach for those jobs. I am all the more dismayed, therefore, to be told that critics of national publications cannot review a piece of work on a stage in a part of the national theatre by men who may be the next bosses of the National Theatre.

The reason given is that the show will transfer to the West End in February and they want the publicity then. The reported cost of the production is half a million pounds — and that includes the involvement of a commercial management. Does anyone seriously believe that, if the same thing happened at the National Theatre — say Richard Eyre's brilliant production of *Guys and Dolls* had opened with commerical backing already tied up, as well it might — the same rule would apply?

Of course not. Provincials, paying £9 a ticket, which is a lot by their standards though not by London's, and £1 a programme which is a lot by anyone's, are being treated as second-class theatregoers. The Richard Eyre who ran Nottingham Playhouse and the David Aukin who ran the Haymarket itself would not approve of that. When I complained to the then drama director of the Arts Council about the last time it happened to me he expressed surprise that we put up with it: 'Why not just go ahead and review anyway?' So, I have lied to the Haymarket Press officer to get my tickets.

High Society is very nearly an excellent musical, but it has one really big deficiency, of which more in a moment. It isn't the same as the film, because Eyre has gone back to the original play and film, *The Philadelphia Story*, to beef up the social comment, the character and the narrative. He has also raided the Cole Porter song book to provide a feast of music by the man who was arguably the most incisive, acute and sophisticated songwriter of our time. The band is brash, noisy and hard-driving; the set by John Gunter is a bright, even gaudy confection of neon, chrome and what passed for good taste in luxurious American houses a generation ago. The chorus is energetic, well choreographed in limited opportunities (by David Toguri) and musically secure.

Which brings me to the deficiency. Three of the four principals and one major supporting character should never be encouraged to sing on their own. Angela Richards is the exception; she sings 'In the Still of the Night' quite beautifully. And the musical highlight is the female chorus version of 'Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love (They Just Like to Kick It Around)' which is raunchy, funny, contains a painful truth and shows that it is possible to sing accurately and dance vigorously. Both at the same time.

One of the best things about the Cork Report on the state of the theatre was its breezy demolition of the idea that new plays empty subsidised theatres (though they do if you pretend they aren't there; they have to be nursed within a policy of steady encouragement for writers and audiences). **Woundings** is a good example. The Royal Exchange was 95 per cent full when I saw it and is likely to average out at between 70 and 75 per cent for the run. This compares with just under 70 per cent for the highly-praised *Mumbo Jumbo*. Both plays were thrown up by the Mobil playwriting competition, which has not only got new work written and produced, but has also encouraged writers to operate outside the tiny casts and single-set locations imposed by some commissions.

Thus Jeff Noon has set his play on an unnamed South Atlantic island occupied by the army, the sheep and a few farmers. The shortage of eligible women is so dramatic that the government has launched a scheme to recruit as many women hungry for a relationship with a soldier (oh yes, there are) as possible to take on an experimental 'Roses of England' package. The result is a disaster of course. But Noon doesn't simply say that soldiers (or even men) are too brutal and women too thoughtless for it to work. What he does is to take the common language of military and sexual encounters — with its talk of 'surrender' especially — as a metaphor for relationships that are genuinely trying to be loving.

It is a first play, and somewhat clumsy in its use of explosive effects, both literally and in the dialogue. It shouts at you. But it also wrenches at the parts of you that are more comfortably kept beyond inspection and that, I suggest, is the real reason some people haven't liked it; we are losing our taste for the moral and emotional mangle. Gregory Hersov directs powerfully; it is well acted throughout and an exhilarating range of settings is contrived by a superlatively-drilled stage crew. □

TELEVISION

French dressing

Hugo Williams

WITH FIVE GOING MAD on stage in the last series of **Girls On Top** (ITV) the hilarity was apt to get swamped by the sheer weight of flesh manoeuvring for space in the small flat, not least that of Junoesque Dawn French, central pillar and pace-maker of the group. The departure of Tracy Ullman has freed them from star-consciousness and put the series firmly under Dawn's militant thumb where it belongs.

Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders come from that same forcing ground — The Comic Strip in Raymond's Revuebar — as *The Young Ones* team and Alexei Sayle, but they have a more varied range of comedy, satire overlapping slapstick. Jennifer is the Neal figure, the apartment slave and out-of-it member, the Stan Laurel element you identify with; or I do. Dawn is obviously

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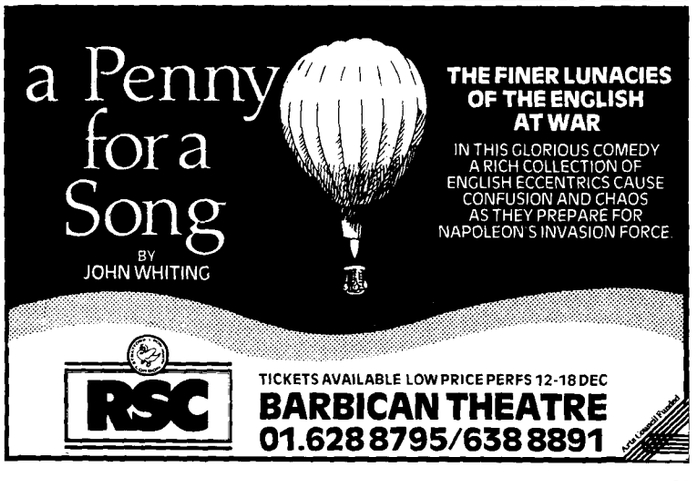
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ARTS

Hardy, the bossy games-bully and conformist, while aspiring starlet Shelley (Ruby Wax) is the permanent 'guest star' from America, on the make. Joan Greenwood, a flaky Romance novelist, is there to field the poorer lines and to kid the wrinklies that they understand the better ones.

Last week, Shelley, who is 'completely inspired by Jane Seymour', was playing Tallulah Tadpole in a school sex-thing about frogs. Jennifer has the sexual-organs leotard on back to front. 'Your private parts are down here,' explains Dawn, pointing to Jennifer's bottom. She bends over with a small mirror to demonstrate 'the best way to see your Volvo'. Shelley's mother (Katherine Helmond from *Soap*) is arriving from the States to check our her daughter's career as a classical actress, so Shelley bribes her way into *The Importance of Being Earnest* as the maid, then refuses to leave the stage. Joan Greenwood observes perspicaciously that the production is not as good as the film. (She was in it.)

My favourite image of the series so far has been Jennifer cleaning the Stock Exchange like Harpo Marx: a human duster in an umpire's coat slung with black bags, brushes attached to both her sleeves.

You always know winter has started when **Hi-de-Hi** (BBC1) returns with a slightly changed cast-list, some member or other having gone on to the National. This time there's a new partner for Yvonne and a new children's entertainer in the shape of down-and-out misanthrope Sammy (Kenneth Connor from the Carry-Ons), who's in it for the free grub. In any closed-cast show there are duels going on and it is interesting to see Spike catching up on Ted Bovis just by going on being nice; Peggy overtaking Gladys, first in the laugh-stakes, then, inevitably, in the line-stakes, as she establishes herself as the one totally indispensable element in the chaos simply by acting faster than everyone else.

David Croft, who co-writes *Hi-de-Hi* with Jimmy Perry, co-writes **Allo Allo** (BBC1) with toff-turned-card Jeremy Lloyd, guiding blight behind *Are You Being Served*, also co-written with Croft. *Allo* is the same sort of thing, the middle-class concept of working-class joviality, done on the quick. I suspect its public actually cuts across class barriers altogether, being made up entirely of the terminally thick.

The jokes are two in number: French accents and *double-entendres*. A knock on the bathroom door: 'Allo, it is I, Yvette, are you ready for two beeg jugs?' 'The old boiler ees in a terrible state'/'Yes, I don't know why I married 'er.' Every funny line sends the mind back to the one before, revealing it for the feed it was and stifling the half-hearted snigger you had been thinking of allowing it. M. Alfonse: 'Ah Madame, I feel like a man twenty years younger.' Hubby, behind curtain: 'So does she, but we need the money.' According to Barry Took in *Radio Times* the show has 'offended many who allege bad taste on the grounds that the French resistance fighters were noble patriots and that to suggest that they were in any way comical is to besmirch their memory.' Leaving aside the hilarity of this thought, the writers of *Allo Allo* have clearly taken the feelings of those gallant freedom fighters into consideration: under no circumstances can their creation be described as amusing, let alone 'comical'. □

Books

MATHEMATICS

Coddled *x*

Peter Wilsher

Descartes' Dream
PHILIP J. DAVIS & REUBEN HERSH *Harvester*
£14.95

MATHEMATICS IS ONE of the great dividers. To the lucky few its truths are self-evident, its theorems things of beauty and the first discovery of analytic geometry on a par with their introduction to sex. To the unenlightened majority, it is just a grind, a drag, an impenetrable mystery. But, as the computer inexorably advances, even the most proudly innumerate are beginning to realise that they may be on the losing side. Are they not leaving themselves dangerously exposed in a world that is experiencing the mathematisation of almost everything?

Some years ago the two authors of *Descartes' Dream: The World According to Mathematics* wrote *The Mathematical Experience*, which is possibly the most successful attempt ever made to explain the pleasures of figuring to those in whom quadratic equations had previously inspired nothing but fear and loathing. On this occasion, though, their purpose is somewhat different. They take their title from the 17th-century French philosopher who hoped to discover all knowledge by exercising the methods of reason, but their real text was provided by a more recent and less sanguine thinker, Simone Weil, who presciently wrote, long before the triumphs of IBM, Wang and Control Data, that 'money, mechanisation and algebra' would turn out to be 'the three monsters of contemporary civilisation'. When ever larger areas of people's lives are being reduced to the status of painting-by-numbers, even committed and dedicated mathematicians like Davis and Hersh start wondering whether the process may be going too far. The moral to be drawn from their present reflections, they say, is a straightforward warning: don't put too much faith in the digits. Mathematics is a splendid servant — it can put a man on the moon, operate a worldwide airline booking service and handle trillions of bits of interlinked information — 'But watch it, because too much of it may not be good for us.'

In pursuit of their purpose, which they sum up as heightening awareness of the relationship between human beings and the mathematics they have created, they employ a variety of strategies. They have an entertaining chapter, for example, on computer dating, in which they tease out the reasons why its results, for all their patina of scientific sophistication, fall so far short of those achieved by the traditional village matchmaker. They then use the analysis of that rather trivial failure to illuminate many other fields where the application of today's immensely powerful simulation and manipulation techniques has so far proved disappointing or downright counter-productive. They approvingly quote John Kenneth Galbraith when he writes that 'prolonged commitment to mathematical exercises in economics can be damaging. It leads to the atrophy of judgment and intuition' and go on to describe sourly the results of trying to model and modulate the rush-hour traffic flows in Boston, Massachusetts ('a high-tech, think-tank city if ever there was one').

They are particularly good, in fact, on the application of mathematics to questions of social policy and its weaknesses when faced with the swirling complexity of real events and real people. The training of mathematicians leads to considerable arrogance when it is brought to bear on the affairs of the world. The beguiling observation that the Russians, the Chinese, the Americans and even the French agree on the multiplication table makes it tempting to believe that there must be other, more significant areas where it is possible to move beyond the divisive clash of policies and philosophies. But, although the risk-analyst and the catastrophe-theorist may be intellectually equipped to enter these murky waters, Davis and Hersh argue strongly that they are often temperamentally the last people to be allowed to splash around. The mathematician, they say, is supremely well equipped to maximise. Tell one you want happiness, tranquility, productivity, profit or consumer satisfaction, and she or he will calculate how to get as much as possible out of the materials available. But what will not be taken into account are the unfortunate side-effects when the objective is badly chosen or imperfectly defined. Although a mathematician understands all the methods available, and will soon be able to wield the awesome power conferred by the next generation of multi-gigaflop supercomputers, she or he is singularly ill-suited to the role of mentor and guide: tending to be impatient, rigid, authoritarian, governed by 'true-or-false', 'zero-or-one', 'right-or-wrong', 'yes-or-no'.

But the world, as Davis and Hersh robustly recognise, is not really an if-not-p-then-q sort of place. 'It is full of paradoxes and contradictions unresolved and unresolvable.' And the over-cerebral master of symbolic logic who tries to treat it as an equilibrium machine, full of delicate valves and sensitive feed-back mechanisms and self-balancing water columns, is liable to leave the rest of us with a lot of messy work mopping up the laboratory floor. □

LITERATURE

Scarlet fever

Jane Miller

The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction
ed. JEAN RADFORD *Routledge* £12.95

ALL OVER THE COUNTRY and on most nights of the week, socialist and feminist teachers in

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Some new homework for poly teachers from Silhouette, Worldwide Romance, and Fontana

polytechnics and schools and universities may be imagined sitting enraptured by the soap operas which become the 'texts' of their lessons and their seminars. Their rapture — more technically referred to as 'desire' — needs a bit of explaining, not to say theorising. Nor is that all. Time must be found to read decent-sized samples of Mills & Boon stories, to reread not just *Gone with the Wind* but its lesser-selling contemporaries from Southern women writers, in which the most vicious racism is 'inscribed' and not cunningly, and to leaf through up-to-date selections from popular magazines and comics.

I have done all this myself: read right through a yard and a half of Jackie Collins, Harold Robbins *et al*, for a review in a literary journal which shall be nameless, and conducted seminars on some of the most unpleasantly sexist novels about family life in the home counties of the Twenties and Thirties. The joke of incongruity is not, of course, lost on either the editor or the contributors to *The Progress of Romance*, a collection of papers about the politics of popular fiction, which began life at a History Workshop conference in 1984.

Jean Radford, the book's editor, defines its scope in relation to that very incongruity and its underlying history of division. She introduces the essays — which range from a study of Greek romances to Michèle Roberts in imaginary conversation with the 14th-century writer Christine de Pisan and wanting 'to read a romance about a lesbian sadist' — by suggesting that what they have in common 'is that each refuses the notion of popular writing as the contaminated spawn of industrialism, in favour of a historically specific understanding of popular forms and their uses'.

Romance could be said to address female sexuality ambiguously and intensely, and that is surely interesting to women in itself. This is not because we are peculiarly liable to 'identify' with romantic heroines; it's because our own sexuality is for so much of the time hidden from our own perceptions of ourselves that complex representations of women in relation to men, even where these spell either defeat or unrealistic equity, are potentially intriguing. Margaret Williamson praises Longus for 'making desire both the subject and the dynamic of his narrative' in *Daphnis and Chloe*, and Ann Rosalind Jones, in a piece called 'Mills & Boon meets Feminism', suggests that romance may mimic sexual foreplay to produce a combination of resistance with reversible submission in pursuit of an endlessly deferred prospect of pleasure. Jean Radford shows how constrained *The Well of Loneliness* is by its reliance on heterosexual romantic conventions, and suggests that it is the novel's gentility rather than its shock value which accounts for its popularity, since its form allows all women to confront 'the difficulties of adopting the feminine role within a patriarchal family culture' and to do so with a degree of security.

The incongruity with which I started arises because these usually pretty limited explorations of sexuality are anyway conducted within narratives which undermine the scope for female autonomy they seem to propose, through the closure of marriage or the ahistorical and depoliticised version of social relations within which such female scope gets carved out. As Helen Taylor shows, Scarlet O'Hara's will and capacity to exploit men in order to succeed on their terms rests on a feminism so individualised as to offer no sort of challenge to either racism or blood-thirsty market competition. Similarly, in Christine Bridgewood's discussion of *Penmarric* and *The Thorn Birds*, the contemporary family saga becomes a form which simultaneously celebrates female grit and independence while denying women any right to step outside, let alone to disrupt, the 'natural' continuities of family and property. Anna Clark, in a particularly interesting essay, focuses on the class implications of seduction narratives during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She points out that the central story of a poor village maiden ruined by an aristocratic libertine disguised the fact that in most cases women were seduced by men of their own class. This shift, she suggests, tells us a good deal about working-class hatred and fear of the aristocracy. It also, and importantly, prevented 'working women from publicly articulating antagonism towards men of their own class'.

The book delivers strong critical approaches and persuasive analysis of different kinds. Yet there still seems a need to return to the question of how popular culture generally and popular literature particularly have come to be thought of either as 'contaminated' or, on the contrary, as divorced from, even untouched by, so-called high culture. A lot of effort has been devoted to revaluing and redeeming popular cultures, rescuing them from extinction, neglect, contempt, misunderstanding. It seems worth asking, however, why it is so hard to imagine a British version of projects like either Mikhail Bakhtin's in the Soviet Union or, from a different political perspective, Leslie Fiedler's in America. For both writers a developing national literature is charted from its beginnings at different moments in the 19th century as it emerges out of collective experiences which ensured that it was continuous with and in a dialectical relation to powerful popular cultural forces, both literary and non-literary, written and oral.

The polarities and conflict between cultures in this country have been maintained by education, by publishing, by journalism. Their history is a class history, and it has not been possible to study popular culture outside or abstracted from class. There are moments when these exceptionally wary commentators may be thought to dwell unnecessarily on their private discomforts and shame at the disparity between their enjoyment of much popular culture and the underlying conservatism of many — though surely not all — of its forms. Alongside that dilemma should be set those sexist traditions which have been used deliberately to mark off as meretricious precisely that literature which does provide women with pleasure, consolation and even, ambiguously, models for resistance. □

Jane Miller is the author of Women Writing about Men (*Virago*).

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BIOGRAPHY

Love in the mist

Martin Ryle

Alain-Fournier: A Brief Life
DAVID ARKELL *Carcanet* £9.95
Alain-Fournier: Towards the Lost Domain: Letters from London, 1905
trans. & ed. W. J. STRACHAN *Carcanet* £16.95

'THE SOUL OF WOMEN,' Alain-Fournier wrote to his friend André Lhote, 'is like an endless valley which opens up before you. The movement of an arm, a look, an inflection of the voice, and you're impelled forwards towards a revelation, a communion, a departure. I've felt it for the least virtuous of women . . .'

Similar sentiments, hardly novel at the time, are found elsewhere in his letters, and this idealised conception of the feminine is central to Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes*, which fuses romantic love-mythology, childhood memories and evocations of the French countryside. Where Proust submitted memory and desire to exhaustive analysis (*Du Côté de Chez Swann* appeared in the same year as Fournier's novel) and where Flaubert had coldly anatomised the deceits and delusions of romance, Fournier set out in the opening section of *Le Grand Meaulnes* to recreate the adolescent boy's experience in its own enchanted terms. It is the subsequent development of the narrative, more than any commentary in the text, which reveals the truth about the myth: it cannot survive real knowledge of the beloved, and destroys her along with the fantasy she has embodied. Having found and wed his lost love, the hero spends just one night with her, leaving her pregnant with the child whose birth eventually kills her.

Fournier's life is very much to the point in any reassessment of his book. He spent eight years in pursuit of a hopeless love, itself inspired by mythology rather than by real involvement with the beloved. Two brief meetings with Yvonne de Quiévrecourt, which took place when he was 18, awakened in him an obsessive devotion which, while it did not prevent him from enjoying less rarefied amours ('I'm not interested in just having a mistress,' he predictably announced about one such affair: 'I want love'), culminated in his transmutation of the 'real' Yvonne into the fictional Yvonne de Galais.

Fournier was born in 1886. David Arkell's biographical sketch and W. J. Strachan's edition of Fournier's 1905 London correspondence commemorate the centenary by presenting some new material for the first time in English. Neither volume bears comparison with Robert Gibson's excellent interpretative biography, *The Land Without a Name*: little of importance has come to light since Gibson's book appeared in 1975 and, although Arkell (in his much shorter account) makes a slightly different selection from the French sources, he opens up no new perspectives on his subject.

Fournier would have been better served by a more selective and analytical approach, critically evaluating the cultural forces that moulded his romanticism — forces dismissed by Arkell with the comment that 'it would take a psychoanalyst to do justice to the matter'. Today, we read *Le Grand Meaulnes* in a changed context, not just because of the development of feminist literary criticism but because young men are nowadays less likely to follow Meaulnes in seeing their female contemporaries as denizens of a glamorously remote world. These changes do not make Fournier's myth meaningless, but its meaning is hardly to be sought in any pretence that it tells the timeless truth about love. On the contrary: the kinds of fantasy which Fournier embodied both in his novel and in his life rightly interest us, now, as elements in a tenacious but slowly vanishing sexual past. A reassessment of Fournier from this perspective would be more valuable than any reworking of the biographical data already amply documented by Gibson.

Alain-Fournier: A Brief Life is, however, graced by some pleasant photographs, several of them Fournier's own work and some reproduced in print for the first time. The illustrations — cartoons and caricatures, paintings, photos, postcards — are an attractive feature, too, of **Towards the Lost Domain**, which happily evokes the middle-class London life that Fournier briefly tasted in 1905. He stayed with the Nightingale family: Mr Nightingale was the Secretary of the Sanderson wallpaper company, where Fournier improved his English by working as a temporary clerk. The strangest incident recorded by Fournier (in a letter to his parents) concerns an occasion when Mrs Nightingale 'had some milk heated for me and got me to try on all her husband's hats — in the drawing room — going into raptures over how well they suited me.' Fournier found nothing untoward in this, but his comments on other matters, social and literary, are both intentionally and unintentionally revealing.

His long letters to his fellow-student Jacques Rivière (who became the brilliant editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* after the war in which Fournier was killed) record an exceptional intellectual comradeship, with Rivière's replies, also given here, showing a keen sense of how his friend's talent was developing. Less exceptional are Fournier's views about English girls, 'so far removed from their French counterparts, who are mysterious beneath their veils, silent, remote': for some time, Fournier explains, he was at a loss to know what put him off these young Englishwomen, until he realised that 'they didn't wear corsets, so that everything they put on looks too free and easy.' □

SCIENCE

Come back Galileo

Steven Rose

The Science Critic
MAURICE GOLDSMITH *Routledge* £15.95

IN THE EARLY 1970s, that prophet of the radical science movement, philosopher-historian Jerry Ravetz, argued that modern science had lost its critical capacity. At its birth, in the days of Galileo, science had been at odds with the dominant forces of feudalism and the church, and scientists had perforce been social critics. Today, science was industrialised and its spokespeople were part of the dominant group.

Later, Hilary Rose and I were to develop this idea, to argue that modern science had become incorporated into the machinery of the capitalist state, committed to its central goals of production and profit on the one hand and military domination on the other.

This critical view of science is of course at odds with the more traditional left perspective, which claims that science and socialism go hand in hand, that science is of its nature progressive but that its full productive force cannot be unleashed under capitalism.

If anyone thought that this view had expired within the British Labour Party with Harold Wilson's famous 1964 attempt to build socialism 'in the white heat of the scientific and technological revolution', a glance at the policy documents now emanating from Labour's front bench would be enough to disabuse them.

The veteran impresario of science policy, Maurice Goldsmith, is part of that older, progressivist tradition. He learned his trade with the left scientists and science writers of the 1930s: Bernal, Haldane, Ritchie Calder and J.G. Crowther. In the 1950s he worked at persuading Hugh Gaitskell to take science seriously and later set up what is now known as the Science Policy Foundation, a forum implicitly committed to the view that, because socialists understand science better than do conservatives, they would make a better industrial management team for Great Britain plc.

So, when Goldsmith writes of 'the science critic', one should not assume that he has been convinced of the radical case against the science establishment. Or that he wants more TV programmes like the ill-fated Channel Four *Crucible* series. Rather, he is reverting to a less controversial, two cultures thesis: that science is in general poorly understood by the non-scientist, but is too important to be left to the scientist. On the other hand, most scientists are poor communicators of their ideas and research. What is therefore required is a particular breed of person who can:

> see the whole picture . . . see the future because of what he (sic) knows of the past . . . uphold the integrity of science . . . communicate science so that people understand its poetry and cease to have fear of it.

At one level Goldsmith is of course right. There is a peculiar ignorance of science at all levels in British culture, partly as a result of the intense specialisation of our education — which also succeeds, as does Goldsmith, in excluding 51 per cent of the population from its concerns. But it isn't just the bourgeois fragmentation of knowledge, to coin a cliché.

There is a more general problem about the nature of scientific knowledge, which means that we don't expect to find an article on science taking its place in the series the *Guardian* has been running on postmodernism. Instead, it exists as facts, or at best debates about them, on the Futures page.

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Part of Goldsmith's book reads a bit like the ads between the articles of such a newspaper section, full of lists of useful addresses of associations of science writers, interlarded with anecdotes about his meetings with Great Men. Some of this is doubtless helpful to would-be science writers, though it would be better if it were more error-free; it is somewhat embarrassing that the name of the French geneticist who provides the epigraph for Chapter 1, page 1, is misspelt; even more so to find scientific terms thoughtfully but incorrectly defined (isomers are *not* 'chemical compounds with equal parts' (p36) — whatever that might mean).

Goldsmith would like more Futures pages; I think I would prefer more debate about the nature of science and the knowledge it claims to offer of the world.

What is hard for Goldsmith to concede — and even harder for those of us who are working laboratory scientists to bear — is that the problem with science is *more* than just communication. It isn't that if people only understood more they would have less fear. Embedded within nuclear power, genetic engineering and information technology there is plenty to be afraid about. A start at overcoming that rational fear is democratic control over science and technology, and this control demands genuine — that is, critical — popularisation. □

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Leftover passion

Lisa St Aubin de Teran

Caitlin: Life with Dylan Thomas
CAITLIN THOMAS with GEORGE TREMLETT *Secker*
£10.95

LIVING WITH A GENIUS can be a disabling affair. The suicides and the self-destroyed who leave us their beautiful testaments, whether in verse or prose, also leave their vociferous consorts: some accurately reticent; others misleadingly letting it all hang out. Lauren Bacall, herself a star, was able to be touchingly loving in recalling Bogart. Caresse Crosby, not so famous, told us the way it wasn't in her autobiography, forgetting that her husband Harry shot himself with a girlfriend.

Dylan Thomas, of course, did nothing quite so dramatic as that. His lingering demise in America after 18 public Scotches, and years of domestic turmoil, scars us because of his poems. The life is less magical. Caitlin Thomas, a bitter widow, has had more than one go at making sense of the myth and the man, but her new book sheds little more light than the hectic *Leftover Life to Kill* (a splendid title, incidentally) or the more oblique *Not Quite Posthumous Letter to my Daughter*, a praiseworthy but unsuccessful attempt to don the mantle of Lord Chesterfield.

The new book is full of unsurprising revelations. We hear of Caitlin tearing up the final version of 'In the White Giant's Thigh' and tossing the fragmented ms out of the Boat House window. (The tide was out when she rose the next morning and she was able to retrieve the pieces from the mudflats.) We hear of her botched suicide attempts, her spells in a straitjacket, her failure to achieve sexual orgasm. We are told, finally, of the strange memorableness of Dylan's hands:

> When I saw him at the hospital in New York, those two little fish's fins stuck out from the cover of his bed. His face was covered in tubes from the oxygen machine, and all I could see were those two little hands. When I brought him back to Laugharne and saw him for the last time in his coffin at Pelican, there they were again. Those two little hands. That's the thing that gets under my skin most. They seemed so utterly useless, and yet they said so much.

Now this is poignant, but not well written. How can such a careless probing of grief illuminate the magnificent, highly-wrought glory of 'Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night' or 'A Refusal to

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Mourn'?

The urge to be a sort of speaking Ted Hughes to Dylan's legendary Sylvia Plath is a defeating ambition. Straining to be an important writer, with only a modest ability and an over-riding obsessive subject, is a limiting endeavour. The words defy Caitlin's (and her cool collaborator George Tremlett's) wooing: we are left with a sense of *déjà vu*, the same old ground gone over and over with little new in the way of seminal commentary.

What Caitlin really wanted, on her own admission, was to be a dancer, some kind of public figure loved for her body and her personality, in the way she (rightly, perhaps) thought her husband wrongly was. In this respect, her books have become a surrogate gesture, a plea for the glamorous passport of bitch to match Dylan's (drawn by her) of admired prize bastard. Unfortunately, her palpable agony earns our compassion and respect; she yearns in vain for the kind of disgraceful accolades which Dylan so whored after. The tales of his insulting behaviour mount rapidly. There is an aptly alienative one of him shocking a susceptible female officer of the Oxford University Poetry Society with an account of how vandals had Clapham Common 'buggered bare'.

Poets love to polish their naughty legends, and Dylan Thomas did enough of this in his lifetime. Surely the moment has come to let the poorly bones rest in peace and return to unsealing the boards of the neglected *Collected Poems*, a narrow casket of a book and yet one still preserving a dozen of the most imperishable lyrics written in English this century. □

'It's easy to draw heroes throwing bits of cities at each other; it is much more difficult to build tension slowly, so that when a vase is thrown at a wall or an eyebrow arched, you feel it,' says Canadian Dave Sim, creator of CEREBUS (£1.25 from Forbidden Planet and other comic shops). Now in its 89th issue, with a circulation of around 30,000, Cerebus might well be the first novel in cartoon form, and is certainly the most slowly paced comic book of all time. What started as a parodic fanzine about a barbarian warrior who happened to be an aardvark came to be peopled with cultural icons like Groucho Marx, Mick Jagger and the grannie from Giles, and acquired a convoluted plot involving religious heresy and interest rates. Just an innocent thug at the outset, Cerebus is manipulated into becoming prime minister and later pope. Sim's scripts are fluid and flexible, full of splendid pastiches; his visual innovations clearly influenced by cinema as well as other comics. And Cerebus himself is a powerful creation, like Ubu Roi with better lines. 'What attracts me,' explains Sim, 'is the hero who doesn't understand what's going on.' (Roz Kaveney)

FICTION

Free associations

Malcolm Imrie

Remove your Hat and Other Works
BENJAMIN PERET trans. DAVID GASCOYNE and HUMPHREY JENNINGS *Atlas* £4.50
Revolutions of the Night
ALAN BURNS *Allison & Busby* £9.95

IN A RADIO INTERVIEW, André Breton once spoke of an image which epitomised the first days of the Spanish revolution: 'Benjamin Péret, sitting in a Barcelona doorway, one hand holding a rifle, the other stroking a cat on his lap.' Gascoyne and Jennings' translations of some of the poems in **Remove your Hat** first appeared in 1936, heavily censored. While Péret was fighting in the POUM to defend the revolution against the holy alliance of Catholicism and fascism, a British printer was busy defending good taste against lines like 'the thing is god's been constipated for twenty centuries and so's had no foul messiah to fecundate the terrestrial latrines'.

Now Gascoyne has restored the cuts, revised the translations and added a well-informed introduction. There are 26 poems and three brief stories here, aleatory assaults on church, state and army, fragments from a lifetime's work which Octavio Paz places 'among the most original and most savage of our era'. With two other collections from tiny independent publishers which you're even less likely to find in most bookshops, they're all that's available in Britain. Unlike the rest of Europe, of course. 'Long live the congregation of asses/Long live the national cowshed', as Péret puts it.

Writing in 1977, 13 years after Péret's death, Pierre Naville, his co-editor on surrealism's first magazine, *La Révolution Surréaliste*, claimed him as 'one of the principal creators of surrealism, if not *the* creator'. Naville's eulogy may carry more weight than most, because of the political demands he made of the movement, demands which led him to leave it in 1926. To him, Péret is exceptional because of the integrity of his life and work: a poet and militant for whom both activities had the same inspiration, the same targets and the same hope, but who, rare among surrealists, never confused the two. When Péret talks of the surrealist revolt as a response to the conditions society attaches to love, it's worth remembering that his refusal of those conditions also took him out of the Communist Party — while Breton, for example, still prevaricated — took him into Trotskyism (and jail for setting up a Trotskyist cell in the French army) and out of it after WWII, unconvinced by the dogma of a residual workers' state in the USSR. It also kept him broke and on the move — to Spain, to Mexico with his wife the great Spanish painter Remedios Varo, to Brazil.

I hope Gascoyne's right about a forthcoming biography. As he says, these are poems *de circonstance*, not just because they incorporate so much Thirties' ephemera (headlines, adverts) but, more importantly, in the other sense of the phrase, because they are inextricably tied to the circumstances of what still seems an exemplary life.

Alan Burns, an English writer now teaching at the University of Minnesota, has, for the most part, too much affinity with the spirit of surrealism to be another member of its Literary Preservation Society, even though **Revolutions of the Night** is the second of his books to take its title from a Max Ernst painting. This is not, for

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example, a piece of mannered automatism, but a beautifully inventive novel; third-person, past tense, with characters — principally Max ('the father of the family: his brick backbone, his strained back') and his children, the accidentally rebellious lovers Harry and Hazel. The extensively oppressive family disintegrates, but the state remains omnipotent, arbitrary; Harry and Hazel head for the border. No Parisian landmarks here: in the cafés people eat pork chops and blueberry pie. They drive Volvos.

Burns certainly adapts the best of surrealism's techniques, but so have others, and he adapts theirs too: found snatches of conversation, commonsense turned on its head, domesticity disrupted by stray thoughts and stray creatures. A torrent of marvels which, ironically, only dries up when he borrows *directly* from surrealism's pictorial content, by awkwardly introducing what often seem like precise descriptions of Ernst lithographs from that artist's own collage-novels. Lion-headed men, rubber tubes, cages and giant insects: rather than the *tableaux vivants* flagged in the book's blurb, these are terribly still lifes, prosaic prose replicas of pictures from a Thirties' exhibition. It's also ironic that they fill the most obviously oneiric sections of the novel, when the rest of it so lucidly shows that our nightmares now take other shapes; our dreams too. □

HORROR

Old haunts

Kim Newman

THE GHOST STORY is horror passing for white, the acceptable face of a form whose strengths have always been rooted in its extreme disreputability. There has never, for instance, been an *Oxford Book of Teenage Werewolf Stories* or an *Oxford Book of Flesh-Eating Zombie Tales*, and yet there *is* an **Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories** (Oxford, £12.95), edited by Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert.

A glance down the table of contents yields such eminently respectable names as Sir Walter Scott, Henry James. H. G. Wells, W. Somerset Maugham, L.P. Hartley, V. S. Pritchett and Walter De La Mare (although, oddly, not Kipling), and even those contributors known solely for their supernatural fiction — J. S. LeFanu, Vernon Lee, M. R. James, H. Russell Wakefield — tend to be fond of an understated, literary and terribly English tone. As far as it goes, the omnibus is an excellent cross-section of familiar and unfamiliar stories and guaranteed to delight anyone in search of a few polite shivers. But it does rather mendaciously suggest that the ghost story is a dead language, a civilised amusement that has vanished from sight.

The bulk of the stories included were written between the Coronation of Queen Victoria and the outbreak of World War Two, and such later writers as Robert Aickman and Simon Raven are seen as literary stragglers bravely reviving an outmoded tradition. But the fact is that, even within the larger horror genre, the ghost story is still alive, certainly transmuted but still recognisable as kin to the stories presented here. It seems particularly unkind of the editors to have ignored Ramsey Campbell and Lisa Tuttle, who frequently work in the James/James/Aickman tradition, but one would also have wished that the inclusion of several 19th- and early 20th-century American writers under the banner of Englishness had been stretched to find a place for the innovative ghostly fictions of Charles M. Grant, Dennis Etchison, Michael McDowell, Peter Straub or Alan Ryan. Even Stephen King has been known to write ghost stories, although he *is* rather more predisposed towards the flesh-eating zombies.

The editors' selection provides the key to the academic respectability of the pure ghost story as opposed to tainted horror. These stories generally attempt to bracket the supernatural with rationality: almost all of the hauntings are grounded in solid reasons (revenge, the need to complete actions left unfinished at the time of death, atonement); very few seriously threaten the straightlaced middle-class lifestyles of the living characters. A common device is to present the story as a fireside yarn, told by a narrator within the fiction to a small audience of friends (typically, after a huge meal and plenty of wine) among whom is the writer (see M. R. James' 'Oh, Whistle and I'll Come To You, My Lad', F. Marion Crawford's 'The Upper Berth', A. M. Burrage's 'Smee'). Thus, we not only have the defence that we don't have to take what a fictional character says at face value, but the extra distancing device of reported events, now safely done with. On the whole, the ghosts are treated much as these gentlefolk would have treated the poor — as picturesque waifs to be pitied, or villains who have only themselves to blame.

Only rarely, as in Henry James and the best of the modern writers excluded here, does the haunting have anything to do with the psychological make-up of the living characters. Indeed, it seems to be a point of honour on the part of the characters to betray no emotion whatsoever, even simple fear. In H. Russell Wakefield's 'Old Man's Beard', a character can sum up the deep-frozen/half-ironical turn typical of the genre by writing in his suicide note, 'when you get this I shall be lying in the gorse patch below the eighth tee, and I shall have even less brains in my head than I was born with.'

The prejudices of the Oxford volume are somewhat reinforced by **The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural** (Viking, £14.95), edited by Jack Sullivan, which lumps together practically every major horror writer currently producing in an entry called 'Writers of Today' and yet accords individual write-ups to even the most obscure imitators of M. R. James. However, the book does widen its scope by covering manifestations of horror not only in literature but in music, film (I should declare an interest here, since I wrote about half the film entries), comics, television, radio and (?) architecture.

It is an unusual encyclopedia in that it does not attempt to be definitive — contributors are allowed to express contradictory opinions, and the formats of the entries are bewilderingly varied. Despite pertinent pieces on such recherché topics as the gory horror comics of the Fifties and films of the Seventies, the overall tone is of a genre aspiring to be represented by Alice Cooper (who isn't included, along with a host of other pop/rock musicians who have used horror in their work). Also, by spreading itself thin over so many fields, it manages not to be exhaustive in any single area. Those primarily interested in film are recommended to Volume 3 of the Aurum Film Encyclopedia, **Horror** (Aurum, £18.95), edited by Phil Hardy; those of a literary bent will have to wait . . .

Stephen King's **It** (Hodder, £12.95), although by far his slightest endeavour in some years, actually contains more words than the encyclopedia. In fact, that is chiefly what is wrong with the novel. *It* concerns a group of misfit schoolchildren who confront a monster in the summer of 1958, and reunite in 1985 to finish off the job of killing an ageless malevolence that blights their home town. Not only is the basic story told twice in 910 pages, but each individual character is put through variations of several experiences. Furthermore, in a cunning book-stretching device, the lead character is given a stutter which accounts for at least 50 pages on its own.

King is great on set-pieces, and the novel does feature several marvellously written encounters with various incarnations of its clownish monster — including a ferocious teenage werewolf and other movie favourites — but it also contains perhaps the worst scene he's ever written, in which the prepubescent bunch hold an orgy in a sewer that somehow gives them mystic powers. Still, one must credit King for trying to keep horror out of the halls of academia and planting it firmly in the gutter where it belongs. □

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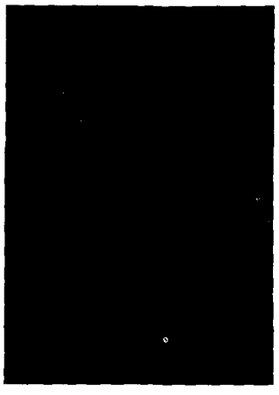

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Disarming Britain

Larry Whitty, General Secretary, The Labour Party
The editor of the *New Statesman* has a strange idea of how Labour Party policy can and should be made.

This year's party conference, by an overwhelming majority, reaffirmed Labour's commitment to a non-nuclear defence policy which will secure the removal of all nuclear weapons from this country. By an equally overwhelming margin, it reaffirmed our commitment to NATO and to effective conventional defence for Britain and Western Europe. This commitment is unwavering. It reflects both our moral commitment to the pursuit of peace and our political and military commitment to collective security.

Nor are these new policies. Similar resolutions were carried by overwhelming majorities in 1984 and 1985. They were set out in the detailed statement, *Defence and Security for Britain*, agreed by conference in 1984, and are publicised in Labour's new campaign for a 'Modern Britain in a Modern World', launched by Neil Kinnock this week. They have the united support of the Labour Party. They have substantial and growing support among the British public.

The reason is simple and straightforward. Britain has a choice to make between nuclear weapons, which we could never use, and real effective defence for our country. The Tories have chosen to buy American Trident missiles and are cutting Britain's defences to pay for them. A Labour government will rebuild Britain's army, navy and airforce instead, using savings from Trident to do so.

That is a sensible policy which provides real security for the British people. It will not be changed by leaders in the *New Statesman* or anywhere else. And it will be carried out by a Labour government which will continue to work fully and closely with our allies throughout the implementation of these policies.

Adrian Mitchell, c/o Allison and Busby, London W1
I've been reading the *New Statesman* since I was 14. For 40 years it has assessed and asserted humane values.

For me it has represented one of the few hopes we have of breaking with the East/West belief in the threat of universal murder as a guarantee of peace.

Like the majority of *New Statesman* readers and Labour Party supporters, I am sure that unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain would increase the chances of survival.

If you can't understand our complex moral and logical reasons for this long-held belief, you should find another Party to support and another magazine to edit.

Ann Clwyd, MP, House of Commons
Your editorial (5 December) assumes that an election victory *of itself* would provide Britain with better defences and increase our influence within NATO. This is a dangerous and age-old fallacy, the self same delusion of the grandeur of government that resulted in the failure of some past Labour administrations.

If we were to abandon our defence policy, the signal would go out that the Labour Party does not really mean what it says, and that, when it comes to the crunch, the apparatus of power has more appeal than the purpose of power.

On a more pragmatic level (and pragmatism is, presumably, what you are advocating), if Labour were to change its defence policy (or, rather, if the express wishes of the Party were to count for nothing), the electoral consequences would be calamitous.

Such a policy change would be the beginning of the end of the Labour Party, when it should be the beginning of the end of a Britain dependent upon the insanity, exorbitance and immorality of nuclear weapons.

What alternative do you propose we take to the country? Do we keep Polaris? Do we modernise it if necessary? Do we renege on our pledge to improve conventional defences, which would be the economic consequence of abandoning nuclear disarmament?

We would go into the election at best as credible as the Liberal-SDP alliance. Will that win us the election? Will that be 'a blow struck for peace'? Will that sound the death knell of Thatcherism?

Even if such a change in defence policy did result in a Labour government, it would be a pyrrhic victory. Why bother having a Labour Conference at all? Why bother having a Labour government at all? Why bother having a defence policy at all, if it is such a nuisance at election time?

Anthony Howard (Editor NS *1972-78)*
May I just attempt to stop one piece of myth-making in its tracks before it becomes part of the conventional wisdom?

Until the time of your immediate predecessor the *New Statesman* had never embraced a policy of unilateralism. Even when Kingsley Martin (1930-60) edited the paper, his own pro-CND signed articles were quite separate and distinct from the editorial voice of the *NS*. Support for a policy of multilateral nuclear disarmament was equally the case under the five editors who followed him, including Bruce Page (1978-82).

Whatever else your leading article of last week may have done, it therefore does not represent in any sense a repudiation of the *New Statesman*'s past. Indeed, it was firmly in line with the paper's consistent tradition from the 1950s until 1982.

Ed note: We have received a large postbag on this subject. The debate will continue next week in our Christmas double issue with extra space given to letters.

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Birmingham Trades Council has received funding to establish the post of Trade Union Arts Officer.

The Arts Officer will have a responsibility for:—

* establishing a Trade Union Arts Club.
* liaising with Arts venues.
* promoting cultural events within the Trade Union movement.

Candidate should have a proven administrative ability and be able to combine experience of Arts and Trade Union affairs. Secretarial support will be provided. It is intended that the post will be funded for a minimum of 3 years.

Salary £10,164 p.a.

For more details and an application form write to:—

Mick Rice
Secretary
Birmingham Trades Council
7 Frederick Street
Birmingham B1 3HE.

CLOSING DATE: Friday 16th January 1987

Birmingham Trades Council striving for equal opportunities

TRANSPORT & GENERAL WORKERS' UNION RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Applications are invited for a post in the Transport and General Workers' Union Research Department at their Central Office in Westminster to contribute to general policy briefing and the servicing of TGWU Trade Groups.

Applicants should possess good communications skills, displaying tact and the capacity to work to a very high standard under pressure. The ability to write clearly and concisely is a vital requirement of this position which involves the drafting of documentation over a wide range of policy and public issues. A knowledge of computer systems would be an advantage, together with the ability to provide a high level of support and assistance at a time when it is anticipated that research and policy support services will be developed and expanded. In addition, experience in and knowledge of the public sector would be welcome though not essential.

An Economics/Social Science degree or equivalent qualifications would normally be required for this post, and applicants should have previous experience in this field and a background in the Labour Movement.

The salary associated with this post is currently **£11,095.24** plus **LVs** and **26 days holiday.**

Application forms are available on request from: **Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JB or call 01-828 7788** quoting ref: **Research/RC/KH.**

Due to the large number of applications we receive, unless you are short-listed, we will not be able to contact you again, and so we should like to thank you for your interest in the Union.

Applications should reach **Mr R. Collins, Administrative Officer** at the above address no later than **Friday 9 January 1987.**

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Council Community & Police Committee

POLICING MATTERS!

Hammersmith and Fulham's new Council, Community and Police Committee is dedicated towards ensuring that the Borough's crime prevention and policing needs are properly met. This Committee will be staffed by a four person unit responsible for co-ordinating the Committee's work in helping to develop a coherent crime prevention strategy and a new and better partnership between the police and the community which is consistent with the Authority's commitment to a democratically accountable Police Force.

Staff of the Unit will be expected to have a thorough understanding of policing issues and the community expectations which arise within an inner city environment. Recognition of the importance of the Council's approach to equal opportunities and to the comprehensive delivery of services to the Borough's under-represented groups (particularly women and ethnic minorities) will be a priority area.

We are now ready to recruit the following staff:

HEAD OF UNIT
£18,171-£19,311

Organisational, managerial and communication skills will be needed to co-ordinate the work of the Unit and develop new initiatives within the Council. An understanding of legal services and knowledge of the criminal justice system, as well as experience within the statutory and voluntary sector, would be an asset. **Ref. CCPC 001.**

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
£13,950-£15,048

The ability to carry out research studies and prepare and present reports is essential. You will be expected to liaise with other London wide agencies including the Metropolitan Police. Project development work, involving liaison with other Council departments and local agencies, will be an important part of the job. **Ref. CCPC 002.**

CAMPAIGNS AND INFORMATION OFFICER
£13,950-£15,048

You will be responsible for promoting the Committee's policies and developing a coherent identity and profile which will ensure that the Unit's work is readily understood and recognised by all sections of the community. Experience in the provision of publicity and advisory material will be required, as will be the ability to communicate clearly and imaginatively to a wide range of people and organisations. **Ref. CCPC 003.**

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
£8,706-£9,567

You will need to provide the central administrative and secretarial support for the Unit. The ability to deal with enquiries from members of the public and a clear understanding of the sensitive nature of the Committee's work will be required. **Ref. CCPC 004.**

The Unit will be located in the Assistant Chief Executive's Department, with the Head of Unit reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive. An information pack will be sent out with application forms, containing job descriptions, background details of the Borough, and an initial work programme identified by the Committee.

All posts are open to job sharing.

Application forms from London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (Personnel), Town Hall Extension, King Street, Hammersmith W6 9JU, telephone 01-741 0904 (24 hour answering service) quoting appropriate reference. Closing date Friday, 16 January, 1987.

You are welcome to apply whatever your gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or practices, age (up to 65 years), disablement, or trade union activities.

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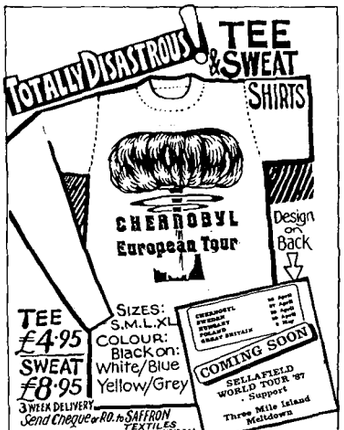
Application forms and further information from: **The Secretary, Centre for Southern African Studies, The University, Heslington, York Y01 5DD.**

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

PAGAN YULE CARDS — full colour *'Odin Riding Sleipnir'*. A5 size, 10 inc. p & p £5 from **Planet Prints, 21 Kensington Park Road, London W11.** W49.4



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AFFECTIONATE FEMALE, late thirties, seeks professional gentleman, 40-50 age group! Preferably hirsute man with insight and self-awareness, for relaxed relationship shared interest in enjoying life, cinema, theatre, books etc. West of Scotland/Glasgow area. Box (50)4229. W50.3

ARE YOU A FIGMENT of my imagination? Redhaired poetess 40s, intelligent, attractive, humorous seeks man without hangups. Into theatre, books, dance, jokes, cuddles and Pernod. If you exist, write Box (50)4233. W50.4

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BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE. Loyal, tolerant, street-wise music lover, wishes share New Year and QEH February weekend/other interests and whatever develops, with friendly, sincere 40-ish woman. Box (50)4235. W50.6

BEAUTIFUL ORIENTAL GIRLS wish to contact gentlemen for friendship, love and marriage. Please send s.a.e. for further details of this serious programme to: Miss S. Oundan, P.O. Box 39, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8YX. N47.8

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FEMALE GRADUATE 35, quite attractive, interests: red/green politics, CND, nature — seeks similar humorous, stable, self-confident man. Ageing drug-free hippies welcome! Photo? London. Box (50) 4226. W50.7

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Companionable first-(ideally, six-) footer sought by sociable sunshine-seeking NW woman. If you bring the coal, I'll light the fire. Box (50)4227. W50.8

HYSTERICAL MALE, 55. Chaotic. You'll end up loving me if you can stand a bumpy ride. I'm the antidote to growing old! Lunatic female preferred. Box (50)4224. W50.9

HUMOROUS, INTELLIGENT woman, youthful 38, living N. London, seeks similar left man, who wants a loving, committed relationship & to have a child. Box (50)4222. W50.10

INDEPENDENT WOMAN, late thirties, slim, attractive, intelligent, needs stimulating male company, ideally tall(ish), handsome(ish), intelligent, good-natured. North West area. Box (50)4239. W50.11

IT WOULD be more fun to share some of my interests & activities with a male companion, age range 38-50, London area. I'm a woman with varied interests which include films, theatre, bird-watching. Box (50)4223. W50.12

KIND, CLEVER, comely widow, 56, is seeking man of intelligence and imagination with view to marriage. Box (50)4243. W50.13

KIND, MILD mannered male, 30, usual haves and have nots, love to travel, so anywhere is where I lay my hat. Box (49)4191. W49.12

MALE, 40, 5' 9", unmarried, solvent, friendly and thoughtful, with wide interests — seeks non-smoking, slim female for caring and lasting relationship. London/South East. Box (50)4238. W50.14

MALE, 32, single, graduate, accountant, seeks sincere girl. I am medium build, not unattractive either. Hobbies: travel, music, gardening, Methodist not religious, but caring, loyal. I am also called Indian, but you don't have to be. Croydon/anywhere. Box (50)4225. W50.15

MOTORCYCLING BRAINSURGEON, o.n.o., sought by interesting, individual woman, 33. Essential similarities: unattached, solvent, similar age, attractive, healthy mind, body and soul. Any race. Northwest/anywhere. Box (50)4221. W50.17

PROFESSIONAL MARRIED man, aged 50+, with sense of humour and fun, living in Central London, seeks single or married woman, for occasional happy therapeutic and affectionate relationship, wining and dining. Box (50)4228. W50.18

RODIN EXHIBITION. Easy-going, sincere, widely-travelled, countryside arts-loving, vegetarian, non-smoking journalist wishes revisit Hayward Gallery & possible inter-dependent, committed relationship with loyal, genuine open-hearted woman (35-50). Box (50)4234. W50.19

SICK OF the metropolis? Green male, 29, keen amateur musician (classical), enjoys literature, art, walking and travel, seeks green female also yearning for rural tranquility and seclusion. Box (50)4220. W50.20

TALL, ATTRACTIVE woman, vital, open, socialist sensibilities, bourgeois taste, fledgling 40, Jewish origin, seeks relationship with compatible, consequential man (35-45), sociable, sensitive, witty and warm. Box (50)4242. W50.21

VIVACIOUS, SINGLE, professional woman (42), bored with same old social round, would love to meet new (platonic) friends for theatre, eating out, lively discussions, etc. Sense of humour important. NW especially Manchester/Merseyside. Box (50)4232. W50.22

WANTED: A man of vision (intuitive and intellectual) with whom to talk, walk, share life's important moments. Non-smoker, up to 55, London. Box (50) 4237. W50.23

SENSITIVE, RESOURCEFUL, caring, educated man, 45-60, quiet sense of humour, sought by female university graduate, young 50, broad interests include travel, books, cinema, classical music, jazz. Greater London. Box (49)4214. W49.17

ZESTFUL, ATTRACTIVE, mature widow, 5' 3", wide interests, seeks mutually rewarding relationship with retired, unattached, personable gentleman, 70s. Essentially healthy, solvent, enthusiastic motorist, cheerful disposition. Merseyside. Box (50)4219. W50.25

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THE PROFESSIONALS' semi-secret 'Bible' — oft plagiarized, seldom cited — Andrew Roth's four-volume 'Parliamentary Profiles' (£20 the set, £2.40 p&p, CWO) from PPSL, 2 Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Dartmouth St, London SW1H 9BP. 01-222 5884/9. N46.4

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Describes and interrelates 10,233 world problems as perceived by International Bodies and 14,176 **concepts, values, strategies and other potential resources available to contain them.** Juxtaposes conflicting *perceptions and priorities constituting the dynamic, multi-cultural reality of world society.* Explores **integrative possibilities, patterns, alternative modes, metaphors.**
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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlet, book list, programme. Free talks or discussions, Sundays 8-9pm ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL. N40.6

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AGENDA

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SAT 13 DEC

SOLIDARNOSC — 5 YEARS OF SURVIVAL. Public Meeting 6 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Holborn bus or tube). With: Michael Elliott MEP, Marek Garztecki Solidarity Int. Office. Organised by Polish Solidarity Campaign, 215 Balham High Rd, SW17. Tel. 01-767 0393.

WED 17 DEC

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. 7.30 p.m. 'Christianity and Socialism', 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1. Speaker and discussion.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY to celebrate Namibian Women's Day at The Africa Centre, Covent Garden, WC2, 8 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. Music from 'Sistah's in Song', Sounds Sista Cultcha, food, bar, stalls, free qualified creche. Organised by Tower Hamlets International Solidarity, International Working Group on Women & the Women's International Resource Centre (Wiserlinks). Tickets at door £3/£2/£1 according to income. All women welcome (i.e. women only). Info 01-739 1786/01-341 4403. All proceeds to Namibian Women's Struggle.

EXHIBITION

AFGHANISTAN TODAY photo exhibition. London University Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. Mon. 15 Dec. - Fri. 19 Dec. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Sat. 20 Dec. 9-12 noon. FREE ADMISSION. Tube: Russell Square.

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BACKCHAT

FIRST PERSON

Wheels on fire

Nicholas Murray

IT'S A SAD thing to have to report but, cocking my leg over a bicycle crossbar after a four-year commuting sabbatical, it's quickly apparent that central-London traffic is meaner and nastier than ever before. So mean and nasty is it, in fact, that you have to fight hard to resist making instant, on-the-wheel hypotheses linking the dog-eat-dog rawness of London traffic manners to the ideology of Thatcherism.

The urban cyclist divides pretty clearly into two basic types: the enthusiast and the amateur. The former is in deadly earnest, as often as not kitted out in track suit or, in summer, minimalist shorts with little else but fluorescent stripes or orange plastic tabard. Some wear crash helmets and masks that make them look like surgeons entering an operating theatre. Their machines are lean and hungry (and probably very expensive) and are ridden with a grim passion that I find slightly chilling.

The amateurs, by contrast, ride very basic machines, over-supplied with rust and with mudguards which rattle persistently. No matter how assiduously we poke little squares of impeccably left-wing newsprint into what look like the offending spaces, the rattle persists. This kind of mudguard, I'm forced to conclude, is actually *designed* to create a cacophony.

At least we don't need to announce our presence with a bell. Our only concession to specialist tackle is the cycle clip, as immortalised in Philip Larkin's 'Church Going'. The line 'I take off my cycle clips in awkward reverence' is quintessential Larkin and seems to fix an attitude which defines the whole ironic, shabbily decent, post-war, English, middle-class ideology for which the poet spoke. The sheer *ordinariness* of the sit-up-and-beg push bike, its lack of pretension, its irreducible simplicity makes it a fitting symbol of good old-fashioned English amateurism. Larkin's Edenic landscape of 'carved choirs' and uncluttered lanes, down which one could bowl effortlessly on a bicycle, was one on which he was honest enough to see time was being called. An American friend staying with us recently spotted my boneshaker in the hall. His job is selling flow-meters to expanding markets in the Far East. Looking ruminatively at the bike he murmured: 'Yup, there's a lot of this in China.'

Back in London, however, the cyclist is not quite as sovereign as one imagines is the case in Peking. London traffic is fast and aggressive and increasingly lawless. The traffic light is more and more ignored, with the result that jams build up at certain crossroads creating the very predicament that lights were invented to resolve. For the pedestrian, too, traffic lights are becoming as unreliable a guide as those crossings in Athens which flash a welcoming little green man at you, then, just as you are about to step out into the road, a furious — and apparently legitimate — flow of cars, motorbikes and yellow taxis races across your toes. There used to be a road safety slogan 'Don't be an amber gambler'. An updated version should read: 'Better red than dead'. The red light in central London is becoming an increasingly redundant signal and, if you think that's far-fetched, position yourself at the top end of Fleet Street at Ludgate Circus during the rush hour and see for yourself.

The other major hazard is the buzzing, hornet life of the motorcycle despatch rider. 'Phoning for a bike' is now a standard feature of London office life and the roads are full of helmeted messengers, many of them teenagers riding with L-plates, who dart in and out of traffic, rarely giving signals and taking death-inviting risks. The surprise is that London's streets aren't littered with more heaps of tangled wreckage.

But, for the cyclist, the most unpleasant plague is the intolerant motorist (the other kind is rarer than the Camberwell Beauty). London is full of angry, bitter, vengeful people closed around with expensive shapes of pressed metal who are easily provoked into violent antagonism towards lesser forms of road life. And you can't get any lower than the cyclist. Often, when making some manoeuvre entirely consonant with that sadly neglected tract *The Highway Code* and which necessitates a few seconds' tolerance from the motorist coming up behind, a window is wound down and a torrent of foul and bitter obscenity flows out. There are some nasty people out there and I can begin to see why the enthusiasts' gear looks increasingly tough and protective.

I've left the saddest bit to the last. The nasty intolerance, I regret to report, is now spreading to the cyclists —once legendary for their sweet mildness of temper. The other day, just as I had decided that the space between me, a juggernaut and a row of parked cars was too narrow, and wishing to live just a little longer, I came to a halt. A raucous voice behind me screeched: 'Get a move on, you can get through there!' Turning with as much unruffled gravity as I could summon, I replied to a breathless enthusiast, panting behind my rear mudguard, 'Calm down, there's no hurry.' The reply was short and brusque: '*You* may have plenty of time!' and she raced up alongside me, haring up Farringdon Road in the direction of the *New Statesman*. Oh, wait a minute, you don't suppose. . . □

FOOD

Filo facts

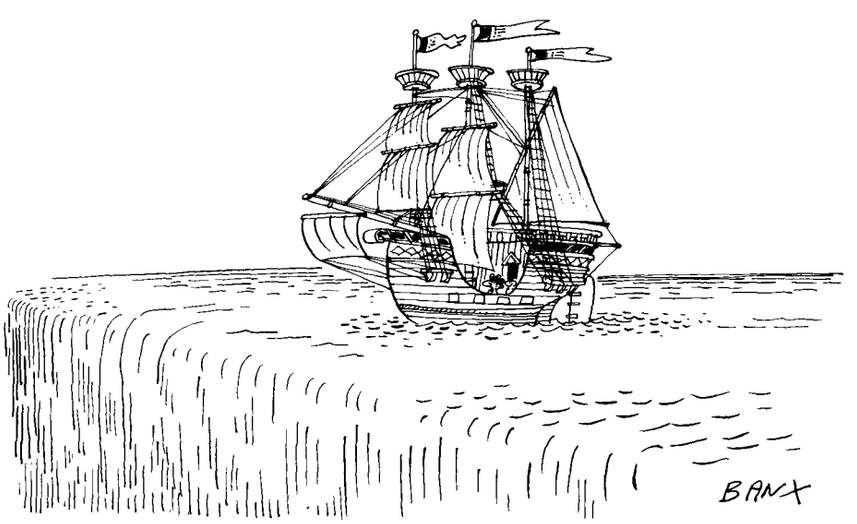
Colin Spencer

HIGH-CLASS, trouble-free cookery has always been my aim, to contrive dishes which look and taste magnificent but which do not consume hours of time and nit-picking labour. These recipes, then, are perfect for the alternative Christmas. The first can be scaled down to amounts for two, instead of four. The batter for the buckwheat galettes can be made two days before, left to rest for a day, then the galettes made and kept in the refrigerator for another day. The rest of the main course takes 10 minutes to cook and three minutes to assemble.

The second recipe, the filo pie, is enough for 12, and may seem more formidable. But it is not. The spinach mixture can be made the day before. It takes about 10 minutes to assemble the pie and 30 to cook it.

Buckwheat is not a cereal; the seeds which the flour is made from are a fruit, a little like the 'seeds' of a strawberry. It belongs to the same family as rhubarb, sorrel and dock. It has been found to contain rutin which can be an antidote to high blood pressure.

Buckwheat has a particularly delicious flavour, one we know from the galettes of Brittany and the blinis of Russia. Pancakes made from buckwheat do not cook as quickly as those made from wheatflour, even though galettes are made with half strong white bread flour and can have baking



'Of course we're lost — that's the third time we've come to the edge of the world.'

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powder or even yeast added to them. They also appear to be cooked before they really are and so their soft centre may collapse on you when turning out or tossing the pancake. So always check by prodding the pancake in the centre to let the air through. Like going to bed with someone for the first time, the first pancake is often a flop. Making crêpes, galettes and pancakes is all a matter of trial and error. Here are some points that help: 1. the longer a batter stands, the smoother it will be; 2. always reheat the batter immediately before using it; 3. use a pastry brush to smear the minimal amount of oil over the entire surface of the pan; 4. the heavier and thicker the pan, the less chance of burning and sticking.

The galettes contain what is called complementary protein — where two plant proteins interact and boost the whole protein amount by far more than the original two in themselves.

Stuffed Galettes with Brown Lentils

(For 4 galettes)
4 oz (115 g) buckwheat flour
4 oz (115 g) strong white bread flour
1 tsp sea salt
½ pint (285 ml) skimmed milk
¼ pint (140 ml) water (more if needed)
2 oz (55 g) butter, clarified

Sift the flours, add the salt, then stir in the milk to make a thick paste. Leave for 10 minutes to allow the flour to absorb the liquid. Add the water and leave for another 10 minutes, then pour in the clarified butter. Beat to a thickish, smooth purée — a food processor will do the work for you. Leave for 24 hours covered. Beat again before using.

Wipe a pan with oil. Pour in a ladle of batter and angle the pan so that the batter covers the base. Cook so that the underside is nicely browned, turn the galette over to brown the other side. Do not rush the cooking, it may need 5 minutes on the first side. It will depend on the type of pan and the heat. (I did mine in a Le Creuset pan on a Rayburn and it took ages.) Turn out the galette, cover with greaseproof paper and cook the rest. Cover and store for a day or continue the meal on the same day. If you do the latter, keep the galettes warm.

(For the stuffing)
4 small courgettes
1 lb (455 g) broccoli or calabrese
5 fl oz (140 ml) Greek yoghurt
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp sesame oil
Juice and zest of 1 lime
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
6 oz (170 g) brown lentils
4oz (115 g) grated Gruyère
1 bunch spring onions, chopped
1 bunch watercress, in sprigs

Slice the courgettes diagonally. Cut the florets from the broccoli or calabrese. Place the vegetables in a steamer. Bring some salted water to the boil, throw in the lentils, place the steamer on top and simmer for 10 minutes. Mix the garlic, juice and zest of lime, oil and seasoning with the yoghurt. Lay the steamed courgettes and calabrese on half a galette, cover with a little of the yoghurt sauce, fold the galette over and sprinkle with some grated Gruyère. Place under a hot grill for a moment or into a warm oven, just to melt the cheese.

Drain the lentils and serve the galettes with a mound of lentils sprinkled with the chopped spring onion and garnished with watercress.

Spanakopitta

(Spinach Filo Pie)
1 ½ lb (680 g) fresh spinach, washed
2 onions, finely sliced
2 oz (55 g) butter
2 eggs, beaten
½ lb (225 g) feta cheese
½ lb (225 g) curd or ricotta cheese
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 lb pkt (450 g) filo pastry, thawed
Olive oil
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 bunch spring onions, chopped
Generous handful of parsley, finely chopped
3 tbsp almonds, roughly chopped
A little beaten egg for glazing

Cook the spinach and onions in the butter for about 5 minutes, then roughly chop the spinach with a wooden spoon. Add the feta cheese, eggs and ricotta, mixing it thoroughly and season to taste. This can be made the day before.

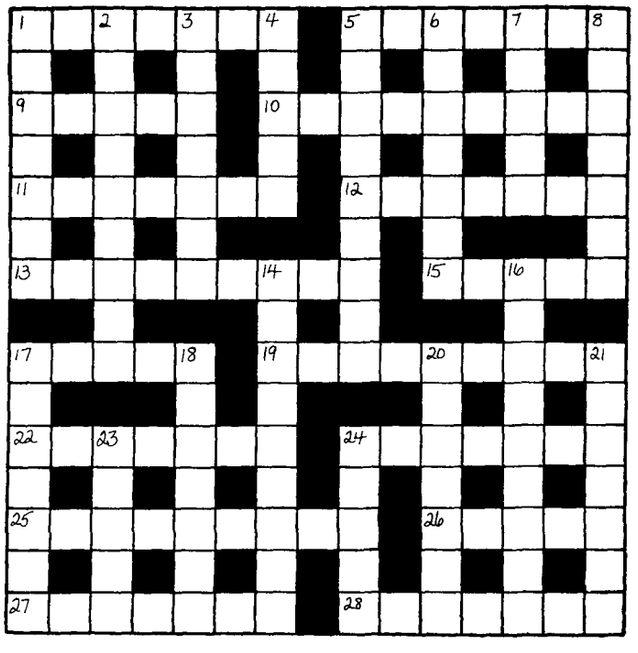
Unfold the pastry and cut the pastry leaves in two. Oil a baking sheet. Mix the garlic into the olive oil. Lay a sheet of filo on the baking sheet and brush with the garlic oil. Continue with three or four sheets and then sprinkle a layer with a mixture of parsley and spring onions. Continue with 10 more sheets, oiling, and occasionally sprinkling with the herbs. Smooth the spinach mixture over the pastry and top with more filo sheets, oiling and sprinkling. After the last sheet, glaze with beaten egg and sprinkle with the chopped almonds.

Bake in a preheated oven at Gas Mark 7 for 30-35 minutes or until risen and brown.

Leave to rest for 10 minutes before slicing. □

Weekend Crossword 1541

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1541, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 23 December.



Name_____

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ACROSS

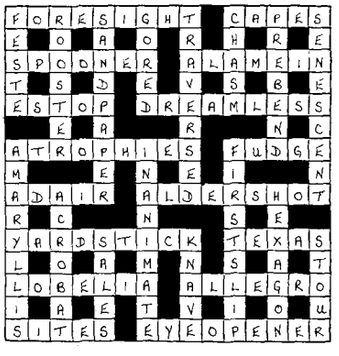
1. Where everyone goes on strike and gets nothing (7)
5. Italian shows expression of surprise about the opposition (7)
9. The river comes right into the shelter (5)
10. Material which is difficult to put up (9)
11. In the miracle are reliable factors which make it more obvious (7)
12. Flying man gives way in a height (7)
13. Entirely surrounded by the material for a deep novel (9)
15. Footer thrills (5)
17. The favourites come about second, the tiresome creatures (5)
19. Plant which makes the brave disintegrate before inferior people (9)
22. Good earth gets the better of liquid (7)
24. Leftists about to make disorderly scene in return for expressions of friendship (7)
25. Food which gives accommodation to sentimentality (9)
26. Student event held by graduate in the city (5)
27. They provide the comfort to make love in vehicles (7)
28. Stretched so that the pain would remain if the colour vanished (7)

DOWN

1. Let Eric get involved in the network (7)
2. Keeps a page on books (9)
3. In the side at an age in the fifties (7)
4. Different article made in gold (5)
5. Herb as a foreign article (9)
6. Club for the writer to defeat (7)
7. Just when love loses its head (5)
8. Survives as a rendering of unending rudeness (7)
14. Sports buildings in which a VIP changes with the rugger team (9)
16. The bird to fish for an insect (9)
17. River in which to shoot duck with a Scotsman (7)
18. Whip needed when cur goes astray (7)
20. For which one needs to be numerate although it is a matter of letters (7)
21. To excel in the wet ground is hot stuff (7)
23. Problem for a bogus person (5)
24. One who gets up during the dinner I serve (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1539



Prizewinner to 1539

Tony Black
(Harlow, Essex)

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Weekend competition

No 2954 **Set by Gray Dorn**

Following the *Guardian*'s efforts last week, can we have extracts from *Sun* leaders or features on the vexed question of postmodernism. Max. 200 words, please, by Wednesday 24 December (just another busy day at the *NS*).

No 2951 **Set by E.O Parrott**

Samples from *The Collected Poems of Princess Michael of Kent* in which each line has been borrowed and slightly altered from a different poetic source.

Report **By Gray Dorn**

You always excel at poetry, don't you? Some staggeringly erudite entries this week (including yours Katie Mallett, so no need to 'crawl into a corner and die' just yet, even if your penultimate line does come from Val Doonican). Many of you seem to read German: thanks to Mrs J. Martin I learnt that 'Lämmergeier' means great bearded vulture (too bad we had to disqualify you, Mrs J., for omitting the Umlaut) and, although my *Cassell's New Compact German Dictionary* doesn't include, 'Götterfunken', Jeremiah Sowerby, I'll take your word it's from Schiller. Indeed, I've had to take your words for most of the sources — having studied literature at a new university where classics meant Kerouac, I've never heard of any of 'em, apart from that sad one about a Favourite Cat Drowned in a thingummy. But have we not all been a little harsh on Princess Michael herself? As even *Guardian* readers now know (and some *Guardian* critics have known for years), postmodernism is all about plagiarism, pastiche and the impossibility of authenticity. Here, as in all else, isn't HRH simply *up to date*? And at least she has now acknowledged her sources, which is more than you can say for so many contemporary writers. But I digress: £8 each to these.

Beautiful Princess of Kent, I will now commence my lay,
And I will write in praise of me without delay;
Stern daughter of the former rightish-wing,
What wealth to me I hope my verse will bring
Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet, vor Ihnen, wunderbar,
Michael, schöne Götterfunken, Michaels Frau, sogar.
I am! Yet what I am, who cares or knows?
My presence comes and goes; I'm lovely as a rose.
I stand quite tall amid the alien corn
With the innocent brightness of the new-born.
Earth has not anything to show more fair —
Look on my works, young Fergie, and despair!

MALCOLM SOWERBY

Shall I compile thee from some other's lay?
And shalt by fortune once more re-arrange?
Each changing phrase with phrase shall interplay.
To me that's nothing novel, nothing strange.

Full many a glorious riding have I been,
Mad in pursuit and in obsession go.
Schooled by those royal powers with me between,
Within so red, without so rich I know.

Must I upon my stately mansion spend
And moan the expense of many a princely sum?
All losses are restored and borrows end,
Within this spending social help must come.

SID FIELD

When in disgrace with press and *Private Eye*
I pace about my room again alone,
I name the friends that cannot sup with me
And watch and wander with a steadfast will.
My propped-up husband drops his home disputes.
The Epilogue tolls the knell of parting day.
The horse limps trembling through the frozen grass.
Not a creature is stirring, not even a corgi . . .
Every daughter adores a Fascist . . .
Uneasy lies the head that wears tiaras.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

O my lips are like a red, red rose!
Those are pearls that are my eyes;
Whenas in silk my body goes,
I would not change for Di's.

I chatter, chatter for a fee —
Sweet Thames, run softly till I'm paid!
For quips and cranks and being twee
When can my glory fade?

I fear no slander, censure rash —
There is no armour gainst the *Eye*.
Far from the madding crowd I dash
And Queen upon my couch I lie.

MARGARET ROGERS

I walk in beauty, in the right,
A lonely bringer of delight.
I keep my head when all around
Would have my crowned, and again uncrown'd.
They prey on me, and tell old tales,
But great my truth and it prevails.
Oh, what avails this sceptic race
To call me author of disgrace?
Should I be base and popular
Drop from my zenith like a star?
My father would have said 'Walk tall!
You'll be the noblest Brit. of all.'

KATIE MALLETT

Gr-r-r — there hangs my heart's abhorrence.
That's York's fat Duchess painted on the wall;
It is not to be thought on that the wench
Has seized upon the moment — and altered all.

Presumptuous maid! with looks sidelong,
Once did she hold that randy Duke in fee,
Who was so proud, so witty, and so strong,
And leaves the world to darkness here for me.

Tell me not, Michael dear, I am unkind,
To sport with all my pussies in the shade,
For passion, linked to forms of humankind,
Finds, and shall find me, call a spade a spade.

JOHN STANLEY

She wandered lonely as a Hun,
And walked among the highest of her class,
Heard voices call, 'Joan Hunter Dunn,'
From among his guests, star-scatter'd on the grass.

Her mind was a Sargasso Sea,
Remembering blooming pommies when a child,
Dear Mike, for nothing less than thee,
She fled all Hermanns gored and Adolphs heiled.

Life is real, life is money,
A young girl's fancies lightly turns to gold,
Rich lovers, a taste of milk and honey,
And life assurance when she's bloody old.

RUSSELL LUCAS

A hard time I had of it
A little plagiarism is a natural thing
I think the pressmen do protest too much
For patience should be the badge of all their kind.

Here I am, a young woman in an old country
Rewriting and partly rewriting
Am I not every inch a Royal
Far more than some, as I do know full well.

Once more unto the book, my friend, once more
Look, here's my last Princess lying in this tome
Stay not upon the order of acknowledgement, but quote.
In my ending is someone else's ending also.

C. FEVER

Twinkle, twinkle, I'm a star
That gloats on high o'er vale and warren,
I seem so near and yet so far
Praise I the Lord who made me foreign.

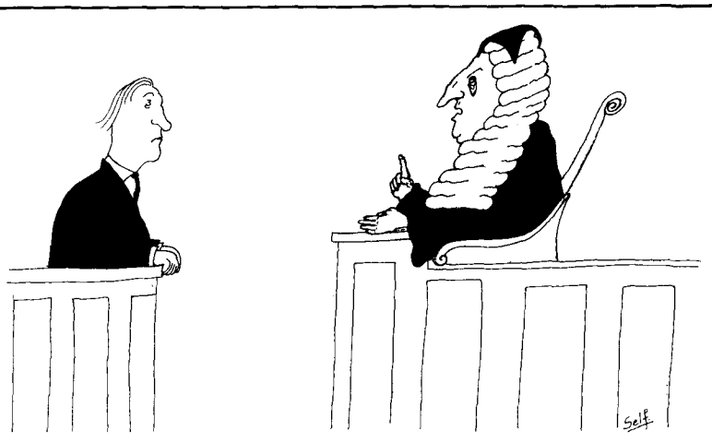
Bubble, bubble toil and chat show,
My laughter's learnt of friends and know-alls,
My passions strong my masters are,
I am the grass; I cover royals.

I am rich but I am honest,
The sweetest royal that ever grew,
O all ye rolling English dullards,
Love me slender, love me true.

M.E.AULT

Ah what avails the royal race?
The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power?
What mad pursuit! What struggle to escape!
Me the newspapers' freedom tires.
The lies that I have read I now would see no more.
I wish I could turn and live with cats, they are so placid and self-contained,
Demurest of the Persian kind.
Sweet the young kittens' love intense;
They drink the milk of Paradise!
Mine be a cot beside the hill,
For now I so wish my days to be
Where cats of calm sit brooding on the press-free lawn.

GEORGE MOOR



'I have considered your appeal for clemency and have decided to reject it on the grounds that I have an appalling headache'

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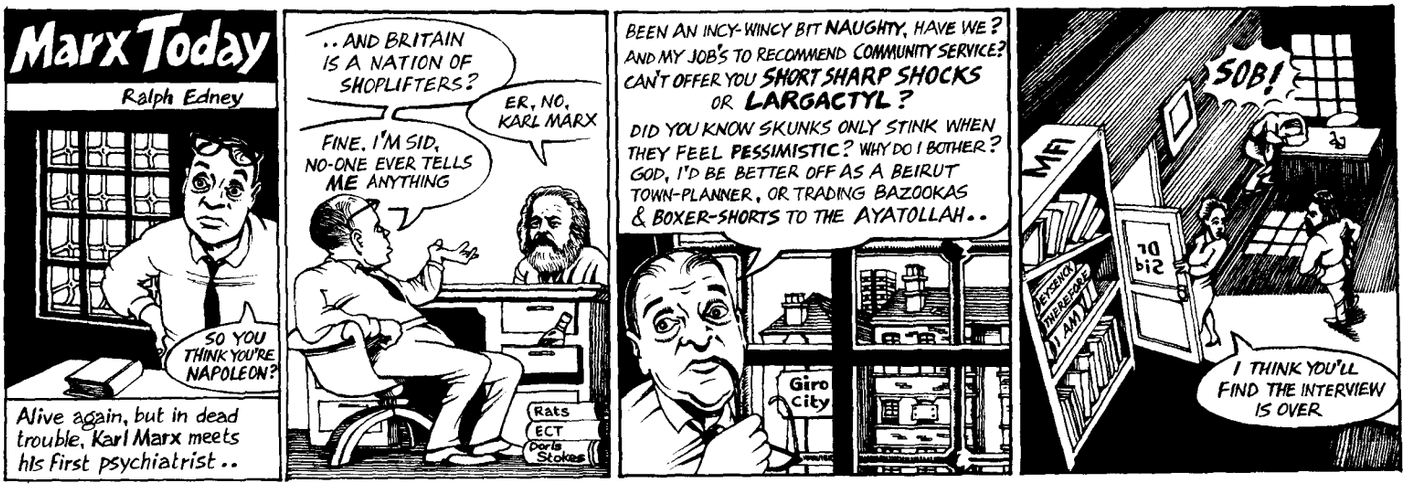
Marx Today
Ralph Edney
SO YOU THINK YOU'RE NAPOLEON?
Alive again, but in dead trouble, Karl Marx meets his first psychiatrist..
..AND BRITAIN IS A NATION OF SHOPLIFTERS?
ER, NO, KARL MARX
FINE. I'M SID, NO-ONE EVER TELLS ME ANYTHING
Rats
ECT
Doris Stokes
BEEN AN INCY-WINCY BIT NAUGHTY, HAVE WE? AND MY JOB'S TO RECOMMEND COMMUNITY SERVICE? CAN'T OFFER YOU SHORT SHARP SHOCKS OR LARGACTYL?
DID YOU KNOW SKUNKS ONLY STINK WHEN THEY FEEL PESSIMISTIC? WHY DO I BOTHER? GOD, I'D BE BETTER OFF AS A BEIRUT TOWN-PLANNER, OR TRADING BAZOOKAS & BOXER-SHORTS TO THE AYATOLLAH..
Giro City
SOB!
I THINK YOU'LL FIND THE INTERVIEW IS OVER

Chess

AT THE START of the final round in the Dubai Olympiad the three teams fighting for the medals were USA (36½ pts), USSR (36) and England (35½). The USA's narrow lead was deceptive since in a Swiss system event so much depends on the pairings — which teams you have already played and which you have yet to face. The Americans' opponents in the last round were the Bulgarians, tough nuts who weren't going to hand out any gold gongs if they could help it. Meanwhile England, having run through all the top teams, had an easier pairing against Brazil.

By whitewashing the Brazilians 4-0 the English team leapfrogged over the US, only to fall tantalisingly short of the gold medals when the Russians also extracted all 4 points from their final match against Poland. This left the top placings (out of a possible 56 points): 1. USSR 40, 2. England 39½, 3. USA 38½ 4. Hungary 34½, 5. Iceland 34, 6. Bulgaria 34. So in the end gold, silver and bronze went to the same destinations as at the 1984 Olympiad in Thessaloniki. But Dubai 1986 was by far the best performance ever by an English team. In 1984 the scores were USSR 41, England 37, USA 35.

It's tempting to boast that, even if we didn't quite get there this time, we are gaining on the Russians. I hope there's some truth in that idea, but there's certainly a danger of a fallacy of representation. The USSR could have fielded different teams that might have done as well or even better than their Dubai side. Indeed, their selectors should have foreseen that rivals for the world championship (Kasparov, Karpov and Sokolov) would have inhibitions about working together as a team. Karpov and Sokolov in particular looked as if they had already played too many games in 1986 and needed a rest. I don't know how else to explain how the world No.3 could play so feebly as in the following game:

Nunn-Sokolov. Sicilian Defence.
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 d6 7. Be3 Qc7 8. f4 Na5? 9. 0-0 Nc4? 10. Bxc4 Qxc4 11. f5 Be7 12. Qg4 h5 13. Qf3 Bf6 14. fxe6 fxe6 15. e5! dxe5 16. Ne4 Qc7 Black is already totally lost. **17. Qg3 Ne7 18. Rad1 h4 19. Nxf6+ gxf6 20. Qg7 Rf8** Or 20 . . . Rg8 21. Qxf6 exd4 22. Qf7+ Kd8 23. Rxd4+ Bd7 24. Qf8+!. **21. Rxf6! Rxf6 22. Qxf6 Qd6** No better 22 . . . exd4 23. Qh8+ Kd7 24. Rxd4+ Nd5 25. Qg7+ **23. Bg5 exd4 24. Rxd4 Nd5** If 24 . . . Qc5 25. b4 wins. **25. Rxd5 1-0.**

The middle boards (Nunn, Short, Chandler and Speelman) were the backbone of the English team. Nigel Short took the gold medal for the best score on third board, while Murray Chandler and Jon Speelman won silver on boards four and five. The most objective measure of individual performance is provided by the Elo rating scores, which gave the overall individual gold medal to Kasparov, silver to Yusupov, and bronze to Chandler.

John Nunn's attacking flair normally picks up any brilliancy prizes that are going, but Speelman's destructive sacrifice from the match against Iceland must come into consideration for the award offered by sponsors Duncan Lawrie:

Petursson-Speelman, Round 8 Board 4. Modern Defence.
1. d4 Nc6 2. Nf3 d6 3. c4 e5 4. Nc3 g6 5. d5 Nce7 6. c5 Bg7 7. cxd6 cxd6 8. e4 Nf6 After the routine 9. Be2 and 10. 0-0 While could probably find the early opening of the c-file helpful. Instead he is provoked into unco-ordinated aggression. **9. Qa4+ Nd7 10. h4?! 0-0 11. h5 Nc5 12. Qc2 f5 13. hxg6 Nxg6 14. Be3 fxe4 15. Nd2 Nd3+ 16. Bxd3 exd3 17. Qxd3 Bf5 18. Qe2 Nf4 19. Bxf4 exf4 20. 0-0 Qh4 21. Rfe1 Bg4 22. Qe7 Qh5 23. Nde4 h6!** To stop White from swapping Queens with Qg5. **24. f3 Bd4+ 25. Nf2 Bxf3! 26. gxf3 Rae8 27. Qxd6 Bxf2+ 28. Kxf2 Qh2+ 29. Kf1 Qh3+ 30. Kf2 Qg3+ 31. Kf1 Qxf3+ 32. Kg1 Qg3+ 33. Kf1 Re3! 34. Ne4 Rf3+ 35. Ke2 Qg2+ 0-1.** Mate cannot be averted after 36. Kd1 Rd3+ 37. Kc1 Rc8+.

Business to be settled away from the board at Dubai included the election to the Presidency of FIDE. The British Chess Federation had declared its support for Lucena and Keene in their attempt to oust Florencio Campomanes from office. Lucena and Keene had put out a lot of publicity alleging abuses of presidential power. Their campaign had the endorsement of the world champion. Whatever else it would have done, a victory for the Lucena-Keene ticket might have brought FIDE headquarters to London.

However, recent British experience (as in Telecom and Gas) should have forewarned us against the simple ploy of buying in votes. Campomanes persuaded the Dubai organisers to lavish generosity over air tickets, and votes for Campo flew in from every corner of the world. In fact, it never came to an actual vote since Lucena withdrew when it became obvious how things were stacked. Better hope that all that talk about a Mafia running world chess was just talk. A re-elected Mafia might be rather unkind to its opponents.

George Botterill

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This England

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☐ 'So many of the Liberal SDP Alliance went to minor public schools, it's hardly surprising they behave like this. They expect to be treated as equals by the rest of the council and would be the first to complain that we were treating them unfairly if we stopped giving them access to information.' — *Crystal Palace Free Press* (Mrs H. J. Jarrett)

☐ The Bishop of Portsmouth says in his Christmas message that he rarely finds a 'fiver' in the plate. Church members put less money in the weekly collection than they would give as a tip to a taxi driver. — *The Times* (Oswald Hull)

☐ When asked what the Government would do to stop elderly people dying of hypothermia, Mr Parkinson said if the temperature went below a certain level for five days those entitled to a heating allowance would get one. — *St Albans Observer* (Patrick Wilson)

☐ A spokesman for Merseyside Police said the problem of rowdyism at Midnight services on Christmas Eve was not uncommon and attributed the problem mainly to people the worse for alcohol. 'For two years now, the Roman Catholic church in Leasowe has been issuing tickets for the service. It is a common thing, some people get "tanked up" and decide to go to church.' — *Wirral Globe* (Leonard Cox)

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